

Local Government SERVICE

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

No. 16. Vol. XXII

APRIL, 1943

THREEPENCE

AGENDA FOR CONFERENCE

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RESIGNATION OF THE PRESIDENT

FOR the first time in its history, NALGO will this year hold a Conference without a President. The news of the resignation of Col. Stead within a few months of completing four years as leader of the Association—years as full of difficulties and hopeful expansion as any it has known—will be as great a shock to members as it was to the National Executive Council. The bare fact of the resignation is regrettable enough; still more regrettable are the reasons which led to so extreme a step—a conflict of opinion between Col. Stead, a committee of which he was a member, and the National Executive Council. Whatever views they may hold upon the circumstances, we know that all members will deplore the unhappy result.

The facts are simple. Col. Stead was a member of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee, but, by reason of his civil defence duties and the distance of his office from London, was unable to attend any of its meetings. When, last November, the committee met to approve the final draft of its interim report, all those present agreed that in order to avoid any ambiguity or to detract in any way from its major conclusions, the report should be presented without notes of reservation or expressions of minority views. After this decision had been reached, Col. Stead—who had from the start indicated his opposition to the lines along which the committee's views were developing—notified his disagreement with the report and submitted a minority report. In view, however, of the decision of the committee (which had been empowered by the N.E.C. to determine its procedure), and feeling, moreover, that it would be contrary to normal practice of committees of this kind to allow a member who had been unable to share in the prolonged discussions of the committee to claim a privilege which the remaining members of the committee had voluntarily denied themselves, the drafting sub-committee, which had been left to prepare the report for publication, found itself unable to accede to this request. Instead, it prefaced the report with a note informing the Council that the President dissented from its conclusions. When the report came before the N.E.C. on January 16, Col. Stead urged that it should not be made public. The Council, however, after a long discussion, decided to publish the report as that of an independent committee which had not been endorsed as the policy of the Association, but which was put forward as a contribution to the discussions on the future of local government.

In these circumstances Col. Stead found himself in disagreement with both the Reconstruction Committee and the National Executive Council, and, as his letter states, felt that he must resign both from the Reconstruction Committee and from the presidency of the Association.

We do not propose to comment in any way upon these developments, beyond expressing the keenest regret—and in this we know we have with us the members of the Reconstruction

Committee and the National Executive Council—that they should have had so unhappy a result. In a career of the highest distinction in local government and in the Association, Col. Stead has won the respect and affection

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of all his colleagues, while the regard in which he is held by the National Executive Council has already been demonstrated by the unanimity with which he was elected to the highest office in the Association four years ago. In the past his wise counsel and able leadership have proved invaluable, and we trust that present differences—which have nothing whatever to do with the policy of the Association—will in no way deprive it of their benefits.

Reconstruction is News

WHATEVER members and branches may think of the reconstruction report, the newspapers of Britain clearly regard it as a document of importance. Never in its history has the Association had so substantial nor, on the whole, so laudatory a press for any single activity. Indeed, it is doubtful if even the Beveridge report secured so much notice from the provincial weekly papers—and certainly no other of the many reports on local government reconstruction has achieved anything like the publicity accorded to this one.

Up to date (and they are still coming in, especially from the periodicals) Headquarters has received 210 cuttings, from 186 publications. These include seven national daily papers, 29 provincial dailies, 129 provincial weeklies, and 21 periodicals. More encouraging even than the number of papers noticing the report was the amount of space each accorded to it. The cuttings so far received total more than 3,300 column-inches—averaging about 18 inches for each paper, a truly remarkable result in these days of paper rationing and condensed reporting.

Of the national dailies, "The Times" gave the best report—an excellent half-column summary in the leading position on its home

news page. Of the provincial dailies, the "Manchester Guardian" published a leading article, the "Yorkshire Post" an extended summary and a leading article. Periodicals mentioning the report included "The Spectator" and "Truth," both of which commented favourably, "Truth" even launching into a 16-line verse, beginning:

"Shall Britain be governed by Whitehall
hidalgoes?

We answer in unison: 'Certainly not!'
We greet with approval these efforts of
NALGO's

To strengthen the powers of the man on the
spot.

We mayn't be enamoured of every suggestion
Contained in the recently issued report;
But all will agree (this is really the question)

That something we urgently need of the
sort."

Of the 186 papers, 88 published factual summaries of the report only, while 98 commented on it editorially (in many cases publishing a summary in addition). Some dealt with it at length in successive issues, one important county weekly "serialising" its various sections, and adding matter of its own. Comment was overwhelmingly favourable, 71 papers welcoming the report and approving its major conclusions, fourteen maintaining a neutral attitude, and only 13 out of the 186 criticising.

"Of Paramount Importance"

COMMENT ranged from the eulogistic, through the constructively critical, to the openly condemnatory—though, as already stated, there was very little of that. Of the first class, which forms the majority, a few typical examples include:

The Spectator—Here is a plan which has the virtue of simplicity and uniformity without changes of too violent a character, and of emanating from men versed in the practical executive tasks of local government.

Essex County Telegraph—The conclusions are of paramount importance to all who have to deal with local government, and therefore to every citizen in the county.

Iford Recorder—By far the best report of all three, [A.M.C.; C.C.A.; NALGO] is that of NALGO.

Manchester Guardian—These proposals obviously need careful examination... but councils jealous of their independence should remember that the only alternative to some such scheme is an ever-increasing centralisation.

Richmond and Twickenham Times—A really valuable exposition of the present situation, and an honest effort, on the part of a body of bureaucrats, to face up to the problem of local administration which should be studied at once by all those who have not buried their heads in the sand. This is not NALGO's last word on the subject; it has not even been adopted by the experts who form its membership. But there are few who have any acquaintance with the subject who will not welcome many of the provisions in its pages.

Ilford Recorder—Quite the most able venture that has yet come to hand.

Preston Herald—(under the headline: "There's GO in NALGO!")—The suggestions the NALGO committee of experts have put forward "as a basis for discussion" are calculated to preserve all that is good in local government, whilst at the same time remedying the principal defects from which the system now suffers.

"No Right to Intervene"

OF the thirteen publications which criticise the report, two do so on the ground that local government officers have no right to interest themselves in the reform of local government, and two on the ground that it is unwise to draw up proposals for reform during the war. These arguments, however, are countered by other papers:

Shields Gazette and Shields Evening News—Worthy of serious consideration because it represents the opinions of men on whom falls the detailed work of local administration... people with not inconsiderable knowledge of the strong and weak points of local government.

Leicester Mercury—Clearly the work of a committee expertly familiar with its subject... stands on its merits as a lucid survey of present conditions and as a reasoned plan for changes entitled to serious consideration.

South London Press—What we hope to win from this war is not merely the conquest of Hitlerism, but also the triumph of democracy, and you cannot have either without making plans well ahead.

The Rural Areas

THE remaining nine critics direct their attacks—mainly or exclusively to the proposals in the report for dealing with local government in the primarily rural areas; so far there has been no press criticism whatever of the other major proposals made by the Committee—the local government boundary commission, the creation of all-purpose authorities in the mainly urban areas, or the creation of provincial councils with planning and co-ordinating functions over wider areas than those of the all-purpose authority.

Most of the nine, it is interesting to note, base their criticism of the proposals for the future of non-county boroughs and urban and rural districts on the ground that they would increase rather than reduce local apathy. "The proposals," writes the *Skyrack Express*, "would strike at the very root of the principle of democratic self-government," to which the *Western Independent* adds: "The smaller towns and urban districts are those in which the least apathy exists." The *Somerset County Herald* considers that "the county council is already far enough removed from the villages and the small town dweller," and urges that the gap should not be widened "by weakening the minor authorities and strengthening the bureaucracy," while the *Whitby Gazette* points to the special problem of the small seaside town which, under the plan proposed in the report, might be absorbed in a larger area in which its special interests would obtain inadequate recognition.

Big Demand for Copies

INTEREST in the report has been further demonstrated by a big demand for copies. Well over 1,500 have now been supplied in response to specific requests—from such bodies as the American Embassy, several Dominion Governments, nine Government departments, the B.B.C., the associations of local authorities, and a wide range of professional, technical, trade union, educational and planning organisations and groups. More than a score of local authorities have circulated copies of the

report to their councils or committees, and many individuals have applied for copies.

In view of this remarkable reception accorded to the report, and notwithstanding the differing views held upon it, it can confidently be claimed [that—although it is an independent document and does not represent NALGO official policy—it has done much to put the Association more firmly "on the map," and to enhance its prestige in the eyes of the public and of members of local authorities as an alert and progressive trade union, keenly interested in the better organisation and greater efficiency of local government.

No Misrepresentation

SOME NALGO branches and members have criticised the N.E.C. on the alleged ground that it published the report in such a way as to give the impression that it represented

NALGO'S £1,100,000 FOR VICTORY!

During London's "Wings for Victory" week last month, NALGO invested from the funds of its ancillaries a further £152,000 in war savings—making a grand total since the outbreak of war of £1,100,000!

the considered opinion of the whole Association and was its official policy. In fact—as was made clear in the introduction to the report in the February Journal—the N.E.C. did nothing of the kind. Every copy of the report carried a preface stating that it was "the work of an independent committee" and had been issued "not as a statement of Association policy, but as an expert contribution to the problems of the future of local government which, it is hoped, will serve as a basis for discussion and further progress." Moreover, every copy sent to newspapers was accompanied with a covering letter emphasising this fact.

While it is clearly impracticable to dictate to a newspaper what it shall publish (especially in the case of a long and detailed report which must be drastically summarised to fit the limited space available), it is a fact that of the 186 papers mentioning the report, 157 did make it clear that it was an independent document which had not been endorsed as Association policy, and only 29 omitted this qualification.

Menu for Conference

IF the preliminary agenda we publish this month proves a safe guide, the 1943 NALGO Conference seems likely to compare pretty favourably with its predecessors. Despite the absence on war service of many of the livelier spirits, those left behind have shown that, even in war-time, they can provide a fair menu for the Whitsun feast—a menu which though bread-and-butter appropriately forms its staple diet, does nevertheless contain a little meat, a slice or two of cake, a few sweets and, no doubt, the usual dish of raspberries labelled "N.E.C."

Some may complain that the Council itself has shown more than patriotic parsimony, bringing, apart from the formal items, only one dish to the Conference table—a welcome to the Beveridge Report, combined with a suggestion (which some recent performances might be held to justify) that local authorities could implement it more effectively than Whitehall. But the Council, like the prudent hostess, may be keeping its "chef's special" in reserve, and there are rumours of a "bombe surprise" in preparation which, if the cooks can complete it in time, will make all the raspberries the critics may produce seem as tasteless as Dead Sea fruit.

Of the dishes already on the table, that most likely to arouse gustatory emotion will, no doubt, be Affiliation pie. But this, too, will be a mystery dish whose contents none will know until the ballot crust is opened. Delegates have prepared for all eventualities, Southall, Halifax, and the East Midland district calling on Conference to devour it.

whatever the flavour, and Hertfordshire demanding that it be sent back to the kitchen, there to cool until absent members of the family can join the feast. Meantime, the vegetarians will be relieved to know, on the best legal authority, that, notwithstanding the order booked a year ago, Conference need not eat the pie if it finds the flavour not to its taste.

Ample "Bread and Butter"

THE sandwiches include two well-buttered "doorsteps"—Sunderland's call for compulsory Whitleyism, and Haslingden's for compulsory salary scales and service conditions—and a meaty offering in which the Metropolitan district and Southwark combine to demand a reconstituted service with conditions based on the long pigeon-holed Hadow Report. Cakes, for the ladies, are provided by the Metropolitan district and Edinburgh, calling respectively for removal of the marriage bar and an equal bonus, while the Metropolitan and Scottish districts seek to attract more beauty to the feast, the former by more vigorous recruiting within the service and the latter by an amendment of rules that will enable the Association to sing to the sirens of the voluntary hospitals and nursing homes. For the older members, the Metropolitan district and Acton combine to provide a tasty sweet with a proposed amendment of the Superannuation Act which—in defiance of Sir William Beveridge's dictum that with an ageing population we must all work longer—would enable some to retire earlier than they could do today.

Notwithstanding the fact that Conference found it unpalatable last year and ordered its rejection until peace brings more active digestive powers, the Metropolitan and South Eastern districts, Kent County, Croydon, and Halifax all produce, though with a variety of flavours and sauces, independent versions of subscription pudding. Perhaps, this time, fortified by the prospect of four more organisers—one of them a woman—delegates will take more kindly to the dish.

"Pie in the Sky"

MISCELLANEOUS titbits include the West Ham and Southall proposals—firmly rejected by the "Brains Trust"—recently—for compulsory contributions to the Benevolent and Orphan Fund, Fulham's plea for wider compensation for injury or death, and the Metropolitan district's call for more comprehensive pensions. Nor must one omit the vision of "Pie in the Sky" presented by West Cornwall in its call for a weekly journal or journals and the wholly encouraging optimism of the Metropolitan district in looking to the reopening of the Holiday Centres.

Of the raspberries already on the table, juiciest, no doubt, will be those from West Lancashire condemning the publication of the report of the Reconstruction Committee and demanding that, in future, no similar documents should be issued until they have been first submitted to the blue pencils of the branches—to which South-West Gloucestershire adds a call for a special committee on rural areas.

Others include Dumbartonshire's plaintive protest that the N.E.C. should offer scholarships to nurses without seeking the permission of Conference, and Darwin's implied condemnation of "Old Gang" rule in its call for one-third representation of the under-35s on the N.E.C. The raspberry season, however, is not yet advanced, and this month's amendments may produce a fuller crop.

A Correction

IN our paragraph last month on the Liverpool civic "Brains Trust" we described Mr. E. L. Riley as chairman of the Liverpool branch. This is not correct. Mr. Riley is vice-chairman of the branch, of which Mr. W. C. Gawne—to whom we offer our apologies—has been chairman since 1933.

I. Keep A Place in the Sun for the Old Country Town!

By DAVID BROOKS

In this, the first of three critical comments—from borough, rural district and urban district viewpoints—on the report of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee, Mr. Brooks, who, as town clerk of Richmond, Yorkshire, writes with knowledge and authority, makes a spirited plea for special treatment for the old country towns—"the little capitals of our countryside."

THE Interim Report of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee is unquestionably a fine piece of work, and it will receive the careful reading and consideration it merits. It ranks high among the memoranda, proposals, and recommendations which have poured in from all quarters since the cry of "Reform" was first raised. Never has there been such rushing to print. Some reports refer to the "county borough menace" to good government and urge its removal once and for all, whilst in others one is startled to read of the need for "compulsory co-operation"! The "Big Five" local authority associations have made their contribution, as have many other "interested" but less informed bodies.

If one soberly scans the various proposals and recommendations, two main schools of thought stand revealed—

1. The notion of a single all-purpose authority invested with complete powers of local government within its area.
2. The retention of the "dual" form of local government.

Somewhere between these two, we may place the recommendations of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee for the creation of an all-purpose authority wielding, in most areas, direct powers of local government, but acting as the parent body in some (mainly rural) areas and nourishing within its frame smaller local government units. The small ancient borough (the Grand Old Man of local government) is to live on in name but is not to enjoy an existence independent of the new Step-mother.

The Small Authority

It was obvious from the beginning that much play would be made of the attractive position which the county boroughs hold to-day, and the large authorities were not slow to claim their place in the sun and seize the opportunity of applying the principle of the single all-purpose authority throughout the country. The NALGO Reconstruction Committee, too, has wedded itself to the notion of the all-purpose authority as the most satisfactory form of local government for most areas.

The essence of its recommendations is that the country should be divided into directly elected all-purpose authorities having jurisdiction over populations ranging between 100,000 and 500,000; that mainly urban areas should be administered directly by the one authority, whilst in mainly rural areas there should be a re-grouping of existing local government units under the wing and effective control of an all-purpose authority which would delegate purely local functions. A distinction is drawn between (1) a local unit exceeding a population of 20,000, after re-grouping; this unit having the power to levy a special rate in respect of any local service delegated to it; and (2) a local unit having a less population; this unit acting simply as an agent (and very much a "particular agent") of the all-purpose authority. We may regard unit (1) as a "general agent" having a wider authority to act for the "principal."

That the Committee has given much con-

sideration to the problem of the small authority is evident from a most casual reading of its Interim Report, which stresses the importance of preserving the identity of the small ancient boroughs who have contributed so much to the science of local government and who stand yet as the supreme example of civic pride and splendour. Nevertheless, if its proposals are carried into effect, the small boroughs, as self-governing communities, will disappear for ever. They are to be interred before they are seriously indisposed, and the Committee offers them a handsome memorial stone, or, at best, a title with nothing to support it. These boroughs have no wish to be "allowed" an existence, bereft of practically all but the right to administer their markets and mayoral charities. Before they fade out in this ignominious fashion, let it be first established that they are inefficient units which have completely outlived their usefulness.

"Size" Not Sole Criterion

The Interim Report has not taken account of all factors, and appears to regard figures of population as the sole criterion in determining the future of the small authority. The "size" of the borough, so often referred to in terms of population, is not of supreme importance. Population figures should be regarded at their true worth and in relation to the position which the small borough holds in the countryside—in short, whether it comes within the category of a "Country Town."

I am persuaded that the Reconstruction Committee has failed signally to recognise the distinction which can and should be drawn between (1) those boroughs whose only claim is antiquity (scheduled to the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, or alternatively, possessing charters granted more than a century ago), and (2) the small ancient boroughs which function as country towns. In any consideration of local government reform, these towns are deserving of more attention than they have as yet received. They are the little capitals of our countryside which, we do well to remember, comprises some four-fifths of England and Wales. Their influence as the country town is inestimable. They are, in truth, "the town towards which the villages look," and they fill a niche which only they can fill.

For the rural areas, the small borough country town provides markets and good shops, and a meeting place for all. The hospital is there. The doctors, dentists, lawyers, bankers, aye, and the hairdresser, are all to be found there. The town hall stands solidly in the market place. The head post office, the officer of customs and excise, the superintendent registrar, the employment exchange and national service offices, and the civil defence headquarters are established there, with the courts of justice (county, quarter and petty sessions) and often rail and bus termini. "Buses bring the children from the outlying districts to the grammar school and technical college. The town is the centre of a vast number of social and cultural societies, and the rallying point for concerted

action in the countryside. How well this has shown itself in the war effort of rural England—the Spitfire Fund, War Weapons Week, Warships Week and all the activities of the National Savings Campaign! Sporting clubs of every description have their headquarters in the country town. Libraries and the world of books are to be found there and, not least, the countryman's hours of relaxation are spent there.

Some are garrison towns. All of them provide amenities for a much greater community than their own and, in a milder but effective form, they give to the neighbouring dwellers almost all that may be had in the large cities and towns. They have within them the machinery for wider service and, with a relatively small addition to present expenditure, they can serve a larger area and population. Their councils are to-day providing efficient services, it matters not if on a small scale; obviously the volume required in Bradford or Leeds is not required in Richmond or Ripon.

The small country town is invariably built around an "expansive market place which provides a real civic centre—a pre-requisite, surely, of every "town." The market place gives to the small country town a coherence and definite centre such as many large towns do not possess. Many of our great cities are painfully striving to achieve what the small country towns have long enjoyed; many of them are engaged in the same protracted process—buying up old property in an attempt to elbow a way to a dignified centre. It has been well said, that all town planning schemes of the last half-century have meant "pulling down": the small country town has only to build up and reach out.

Special Treatment Essential

The country town requires and merits special treatment in any reform of local government, and (in marked contrast to many of the amorphous products of the nineteenth century) it should be fully preserved and developed in any rational scheme of reorganisation. It is the true, historic, and inevitable centre of the region in which it stands as the focal point. It was so from the beginning, and it is so to-day, no matter what type of authority is set up, and no matter from what administrative seat it governs. Here, from time without memory, is the town whence the countryside has received its life-stream; and no one is in closer touch with that countryside than the borough council. It should have all possible powers of local government, for here is local government in its truest form, and here it can flow and reach out naturally and with ease. There is a growing body of opinion that the borough country town should be enlarged to include, as an initial step, the adjoining parishes which are now all but physically part of it; and, ultimately, the areas within its "sphere of influence." This would cause no clashing of mentalities; no social disturbance through contact between conflicting urban and rural temperaments, on which so much emphasis is placed in the Scott Report. For there is already community of interest; indeed, there are ties of kinship.

If the country town (strengthened by the area which it feeds and which is fed by it) cannot, of itself, administer all services for financial reasons, that is not an insuperable difficulty. Considerations of finance must not be allowed to impede the full development of the potentialities of the country town. Any financial difficulty can be met by grant-in-aid. This is an age of subsidies. It is Parliament's business, and Parliament has had to solve far more difficult problems in the past and will have to decide many more in the future.

The need for this fuller recognition of the small country town is pressing, for there is every likelihood that, with a dispersal of industry (foreshadowed in Government reports), these towns will become larger centres of the community, independently of any alteration of the structure of local government. These reports favour dispersal and recommend that certain types of industry should be brought, not into the heart of the countryside, but at its "door-step," namely, the small country town, which is ideally suitable for the location of light and mobile industries. Such industries will be welcomed, as benefiting both the town and the worker in his new and pleasanter surroundings.

No "Rule of Thumb" Reform

Reorganisation should not be carried out by "rule of thumb"; to say, for example, that all boroughs under 10,000 or 20,000 population should cease to be, without taking into account what each borough provides, not only for its own people, but for the wide region in which it stands as the focal point. There should be no agreed population level. A general sweep to obliterate the ancient boroughs on grounds of poulation or rateable value would be a fearful thing. It would sever the roots of a thousand years of civic growth, and would leave untouched the obvious local government misfits and unsymmetrical appendages, e.g., the concentrations which are over-spills of other towns, and which literally stand out a mile in many of our large industrial centres.

In dealing with the small country towns, the usually accepted tests of rateable value and population cannot be applied; the town itself, the surrounding countryside, and the county itself, must be considered. All are different—the North and East Ridings, Westmorland, Cumberland, Devon, the Fen country—these cannot be dealt with in the same clause or paragraph as Lancashire, the Midlands, Tyneside, Teeside, Merseyside, and Greater London. The country towns, with their leisurely growth, are not confronted with the same problems as the large cities where, in the last century, men, women and children were hastily and haphazardly massed together. Legislation must not be passed which is based solely on figures of population and rateable value, without taking into full account what else a small borough provides, not only in plain matter-of-fact service, but in the less tangible things. This factor was not overlooked by the Royal Commissioners, who conducted exhaustive enquiries into the administration of no fewer than 200 boroughs more than a century ago. I have before me the Commissioners' Report on my own borough, in which I read in picturesque language that "Richmond, moreover, is the capital of a district called Richmondshire, and it has a very respectable constituency; in fact, the amount of its population but inadequately represents its real importance." I can also make a present-day comparison between my borough, with its 7,000 civil population, and an urban district well known to me, whose streets bear nothing like the volume of motor and pedestrian traffic of the "small" borough.

Some of the ancient boroughs were self-governing communities in the days of the Normans and Plantagenets, and are the very foundations from which the present vast edifice

of local government sprang. They are the very stuff of England—as truly English as the oak. Who would put out the little flame which has glowed steadily from Conquest days through all England's vicissitudes of fortune? The framework of civil entity must be maintained. Let it not be broken in the urge for "reform." Whatever else, civic spirit and the tradition of disinterested service cannot be manufactured to order. Like Topsy, it grow'd.

The burgesses governed "their town," paved and lighted the streets and watched them after dark. They subscribed to the arts, promoted the formation of trade guilds or companies, and provided forms of recreation and entertainment centuries before the days of Government encouragement, grants, or subsidies. Many of them did not levy even the semblance of a rate, because they derived (as they do yet) substantial incomes from corporate estates, strong stone-built dwellings and shops, quarries, and what to-day is handily summed up in the phrase "trading undertakings." The corporations had enterprise and imagination, and their sturdy independence impelled many of them to make ambitious experiments. They were making bye-laws for the "good rule and government" of their boroughs 700 years before the passing of the Municipal Corporations Acts.

The corporation of the borough of which I am best qualified to speak was providing street lighting by gas in 1821. From the year 1566 it governed the Grammar School founded on Queen Elizabeth's grant to the borough, and in 1811 (22 years before the first grant from the Exchequer to elementary schools) it established a corporation school. In 1583 the corporation, as water undertaker, embarked on the ambitious project of piping water from the hillside springs. It was a fire prevention authority and the proud possessor of a water fire-engine in 1765. It owned a theatre (as it does yet) where Garrick and Kean played before audiences from the Ridings.

Preserving Civic Interest

The ancient boroughs were providing "all essential services" long years ago, and to-day many of them own and maintain profitable undertakings—gas, water, electricity, markets, spas, quarries, ferries, transport. Some own extensive plantations and derive considerable revenue from the sale of timber.

Many of them give their name to wide regions of our own countryside and to cities and towns overseas, with whom there are close ties of friendship, the significance of which has never been fully appreciated. Great figures in England's history are for ever linked with the old boroughs—names which have been extolled in our literature, verse, and song.

One essential factor in any reorganisation must be to preserve and increase the citizens' sense of responsibility for the management of local affairs. If reorganisation produces greater administrative efficiency but at the same time diminishes interest by individual ratepayers in local government, it may do more harm than good. The most important feature in local government is local interest. There should be careful, calm reflection before any attempt is made to standardise local government by the creation of new "units," all depressingly alike. Uniformity can be overdone. There is nothing like the ancient boroughs and each has a special story to itself. They have been civic entities for centuries, and their functions must not lightly be passed over to another, to whom the borough would be "just another thousand acres."

In these old towns, local government is something more than a system. The townspeople take an intense interest in the affairs of the borough, where the office of mayor has a significance which it is difficult if not impossible to define. The general body of inhabitants (who, when all is said and done, are the persons most affected by any reorganisation of local

government) are more concerned with personal convenience, coupled with an instinctive affection for their town, than with cold detached efficiency and the super-standards of a new "unit." The inhabitants of these boroughs have been accustomed to ready and easy access to the town hall and the "city fathers." They will not readily part with their "comfortable availability."

No responsible person will be heard to plead for the retention of an inefficient authority, however ancient it may be and however great may have been its contribution in the past; but, on the other hand, one should not be too concerned if some of the small boroughs are not economic units, as judged by some standards. "Uneconomic" is not the same thing as "inefficient."

These boroughs have a legal existence by royal grant—the source of all their corporate life, and in the eye of the law they have a very superior status. Who shall have the right or the power to abrogate the King's Charter? Some still "hold" their borough under a yearly rent-charge payable to the Crown from Norman times, and the burgesses are mindful that they still hold their borough of the King and still render to him this tangible acknowledgment of his sovereignty.

A Rural "County Borough"

In my view, the problem of the small authority resolves itself into two divisions and any proposals for reorganisation must differentiate sharply between (1) those ancient towns which are county towns; and (2) those towns which can only claim to be ancient and historic.

Ancient Boroughs which are actual or potential County Towns.

- These should, as far as possible, be made into rural or country all-purpose authorities by the inclusion of adjoining rural and urban districts.
- Those which, for reasons other than financial considerations, are not capable of conversion into country all-purpose authorities, should be extended to embrace the rural areas within their immediate "sphere of influence," and should administer all local functions and have the power to levy the general rate and to raise loans. Those services which are national in character, e.g., education, police, public assistance, sanatoria, main roads and bridges, should be administered by joint boards.

Small Boroughs which can only claim to be Ancient and Historic.

- These, each with a directly-elected council, should come under the wing of an all-purpose authority on substantially the same relationship as that which exists to-day between county council and county district.
- The ancient borough should retain its name, its mayor (having precedence within the ancient borough), its corporation, charter and prescriptive rights and privileges, and its own court of quarter sessions and commission of the peace if now possessed. It should continue to administer all present services save those national in character, which would be dealt with by the all-purpose authority.
- The general rate should be levied by the all-purpose authority, but the ancient borough would have power to levy a special rate to meet additional requirements on the lines proposed in the NALGO Reconstruction Committee's interim report. The income from corporate property would not, of course, pass to the all-purpose authority.

There is no more opportune time than the present to revive the shining splendour of the mediaeval days of the old country towns. With careful, controlled planning, there is no end to their possibilities in the Britain that is to be. Through the centuries, they have fought the good fight for democratic self-government, and they still run their course with good heart and healthy ability.

II. Give Rural Districts the Powers—they will Finish the Job!

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By NEVILLE HOBSON, M.C., J.P.

Mr. Hobson, who is clerk to the Beverley Rural District Council, vice-chairman of the Rural District Councils' Association, and a member of the Railway Assessment Authority, here states the claim for the rural districts. His article, of course, represents his personal views only, and not necessarily those of the R.D.C.A.

THE Interim Report of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee contains some startling recommendations. Directly elected all-purpose authorities (with populations ranging from 100,000 to 500,000) are recommended. Where the area of any such authority is mainly urban, it will function and operate directly from a single appropriate centre; but large tracts of rural England are to be content with the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table. They are merely to be permitted to elect councils to act as district committees, each of which will "administer the services delegated to it, under the control of the all-purpose authority."

Rural district councils have already had experience of delegation, and no more fundamental change could have been proposed than the loss of the direct executive power they now enjoy. The Local Government Act, 1929, empowered the delegation of high-ways by county councils to rural authorities; but, as a general rule, this did not operate satisfactorily from the point of view of either side. Nor is delegation likely to be successful, if those who urge it will consider the nebulous and anæmic position of those who are merely permitted to debate and make suggestions, but are unceremoniously pushed to one side whenever the principals so decide.

«In contrast with this, however, those who live in the more densely populated areas are to participate in a genuine system of government—akin to that which has been the boast of our nation for generations. These ratepayers will have easy personal access to their elected representatives, who will live or work within relatively short distances of the centre of administration, around which there will be a substantial community of interest.

A Modern Rural Ride

Now let us take an imaginary motor run (by special permission of the Minister of Transport) through Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland (excluding Tyne-side), the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Bedford, Buckingham, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. After travelling more than 1,000 miles, we shall have a better appreciation of the claims of the rural authorities, whose status and powers have, since 1894, permitted the ratepayers in these scattered but important localities to enjoy the same basic democratic government as has operated, and is still to operate, in the more intensively developed parts of England.

Each parish, or small group of parishes, has its elected member of the rural council, which has its headquarters within a reasonable distance from the parishes served. The members and executive are well known and easily accessible; the full council meets every month; no undue delegation to committees is necessary; and the special problems of widely scattered areas are known and appreciated. The greatest industry in the country, the cultivation of the soil, is the life-blood of most of these areas, and those who would deny to the country-folk their birthright should reflect upon the loyal and intensive way in which agriculture is now serving the nation—with a minimum of friction and a complete

absence of strikes and organised agitation. It would, indeed, be monstrous if rural England were to be denied an active and genuine partnership in the New Order.

Most planners in the international sphere have made it clear that states such as Greece and Norway are to be given worthy and honoured places in the new federations. Admittedly they are very sparsely populated, but the implications of freedom (purchased by effort and sacrifice) call for the recognition of certain principles; and it is disappointing to find that there are inadequately informed—but otherwise quite fair-minded—people in this freedom-loving island of ours who fail to recognise the only terms and conditions under which genuine democratic local government can operate.

To talk of "government" by advisory district committees of the nature proposed is a travesty. To speak of "democracy" in the same breath as the recommendation of the servile organisms now contemplated is an insult to the large bodies of people whose service to the Empire has been outstanding.

There may well be certain populous areas which will lend themselves to grouping into convenient all-purpose authorities without denying to the residents concerned those liberties for which this nation purports to be fighting; but let it be recorded, clearly and unequivocally, that the consequences of some of the NALGO proposals would be the ignoble end of these objectives—so far as rural England is concerned.

Urban Standards not Ideal

These revolutionary reforms (so-called) might have been better understood had the standard of administration and the local government "atmosphere" of the great industrial centres attained those efficient and ethical heights which such schemes would infer. It so happens, however, that many rural authorities had to take under their charge after the outbreak of war thousands of children from the county boroughs and large municipalities, which had boasted of their public health and educational services. These were taken to villages where—notwithstanding the more limited facilities available—bright and happy homes awaited them and there introduced to standards of cleanliness and outlook which many of our congested localities might well emulate.

Admittedly, the countryside will call for an advance in many sparsely populated areas as regards such services as water, sewerage, refuse collection, etc., but those who picture rural England as the home of reactionary and short-sighted authorities should study the official statistics relating to infectious diseases and mortality, which establish an extremely high standard of rural public health; though the country-folk will welcome, at least as much as the town-dweller, the improvements and amenities which are now envisaged.

Problems of Rural Development

At this point, however, certain basic difficulties should be recognised—difficulties, incidentally, which would have baffled any local authority, great or small. Scattered all over England and Wales are thousands of small villages. They may contain 300 to 800 people, but the population of the majority is some-

where in the region of 500—most of which are too far from the next village to be operated jointly for the purpose of housing, sewerage, etc. They must continue indefinitely to be self-contained, and—to take one important service—it is an extremely costly matter to put down main sewers and disposal works for scattered communities of this nature, with the minimum of rateable value.

It has been neither the responsibility nor the fault of rural authorities that this situation has arisen. Agricultural development leads inevitably to the dispersal of properties and buildings; and, so far as the residential areas are concerned, these have not hitherto been subject to the more effective control and planning which are now to operate, for the first time, on a national basis. Those, therefore, who claim the prerogative of intensive criticism of rural authorities should make themselves better acquainted with the complicated issues involved. Whoever undertakes such services will, in many districts, be confronted with serious financial and administrative problems; for (unlike the compact urban areas) it will always be difficult to provide all the main services for a rural district with a population of, say, 10,000–20,000 which occupies an area of from 80 to 150 square miles. Just think it over!

One of the superficial attractions of the all-purpose authority is its presumed capacity to handle all its problems on a self-contained basis. Is it seriously suggested, however, that the county boroughs of X, Y, and Z (with their present rate poundages of 17s., 18s. 9d. and 20s. 6d. respectively, and the complex problems of their own which await the advent of peace) will be prepared to shoulder the additional heavy burden of providing modern public health services and housing development in rural villages many miles from their borders—without demanding some kind of assistance?

The County Councils

So far as county councils are concerned, there is no need for the R.D.C.s to plead for assistance, as they have a clear legal and moral right to grants from the county rate fund under present legislative powers. The post-war improvements which will have to be considered will maintain, and add to, the rateable value of these scattered districts, whose householders have the pleasure of paying about 7s. 6d. out of every 10s. they provide for rates into the county fund (the R.D.C. retaining the balance of 2s. 6d.). If, therefore, the county pool contributes to necessary modern developments, this should not be regarded as a special favour dispensed by benign county councillors, but rather as the right of the rural parishes—who receive a smaller share of the general amenities and benefits paid for out of the county fund than many of their urban neighbours.

This reference to the county authorities makes it desirable to anticipate the contention that, in the case of the areas which have been specifically mentioned, the existing county councils should be the all-purpose authorities. This would deny, however, to the occupants of rural England those treasured rights to share in a democratic system of local government to which they are entitled; and neither NALGO, nor even the Government itself, should assume that those who are privileged to represent the countryside will be content to

sit quietly by and watch their rights undermined in this unwarranted way.

The vital place of agriculture in our national and local government structure has already been stressed, but the future will hold for this great industry problems and uncertainties which make it desirable that it should continue to be linked up with the rural councils, on which it can obtain adequate representation.

The members of the county councils are not as well qualified to deal with rural problems as the elected representatives of the R.D.C.s. If, indeed, parish meetings were held in, say, 50 villages in different parts of the country, and those present were asked to write down the names of their county councillors, comparatively few would be able to do so. This does not necessarily imply discredit to those representatives, as the wide range of work of the county councils, their quarterly meetings, the necessity for extensive committee control, and the large number of officials now involved negative (with a few noteworthy exceptions) close contact and intimacy between the councillors and those who purport to elect them.

Moreover, many county councils are already over-loaded, and are little more than a "half-way house" between a democratic institution and a bureaucracy super-imposed on an oligarchy. This may appear involved, but it is of vital concern to the rural communities! After the war, however, the county authorities will be confronted with many major problems in regard to highways, education, hospitals, and certain medical services—not to mention countless other duties which bewilder, even to-day, the elected representatives when they are confronted with their quarterly committee and council minutes.

Before leaving the subject of county council control, one important question must be asked. *Where do the spokesmen for these authorities obtain their mandate?* The county ratepayers consist of those who reside in the (a) non-county boroughs, (b) urban districts, (c) rural districts. Indeed, the urban and rural ratepayer is, in fact, the same person as the county ratepayer. Is it seriously contended that these people are demanding a reconstruction of local government which would take away from a large part of the county family many of the democratic rights they have enjoyed since 1894?

The Rural Claim

The writer is the clerk to a rural authority in the North-East of England. If John Smith or Martha Brown from the parish of Netherdale wishes to see him personally, either can do so on short notice. They can also interview the surveyor or inspector or the rating officer at any time, and there is a happy and direct personal relationship between the R.D.C. and the village communities—few members of which can enter the more palatial headquarters of our county council with anything like the same confidence and facility.

To sum up: Subject to any reasonable modification or adjustment in appropriate cases and to the elimination of any unsatisfactory units of administration, the R.D.C.s must remain an integral part of local government in the future. They will fight "to the death" any nebulous suggestions of district committees or delegation. There is all the difference in the world between a definite partner (though a junior one) and an indefinite agent, who can be dismissed or swept aside at a moment's notice.

There are already in existence a large number of R.D.C.s which have carried through extensive modern development, and their experience has been of great value to those authorities whose activities are confined to agricultural areas. There is, obviously, no cause to disturb those councils. They possess

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III. Drastic Measures Not Needed

By T. E. PARKER, A.L.A.A., F.V.A.

Mr. Parker, who is chief valuation officer and deputy chief financial officer to Wigston U.D.C., argues that existing measures can provide all needed changes in local government structure and that the drastic proposals made in the interim report are either unnecessary or have already been tested and rejected.

IT seems to me that the authors of the Reconstruction Report have a definite county borough bias. In paragraph 43 they stress the merits of the county borough—but nowhere do they mention its demerits, such as high rateable values and correspondingly high rate poundages, which are frequently found in these large towns. Such areas are, moreover, peculiarly susceptible to periods of depression with consequent social and financial evils outweighing the advantages claimed.

My view of the report is that, generally speaking, its proposals have already been explored, tested, and repudiated—or, where they have not, adequate machinery already exists for any "desirable" amendment of the existing local government structure. In May, 1922, for example, the Bill to confirm provisional orders made by the Minister of Health for the extension of the boundaries of Leeds and Bradford by the inclusion of neighbouring urban areas (and in the case of Leeds, of substantial rural areas), was rejected in the House of Commons by a majority of nearly four to one. Since then, many borough

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substantial rateable values, but they will continue to be confronted with the problem of the scattered and independent townships, which call for a system of representation and administration different from that of the compact municipalities.

It is, indeed, unthinkable that the trusts and responsibilities involved should be handed over exclusively to the large cities and towns, or to the county councils. Let it be reiterated a thousandfold that democratic local government (to which Parliament has pledged itself) must be (1) democratic, (2) local, (3) government; and rural England does not intend to be sacrificed through the deafness of "those who won't hear"!

This is not special pleading. It is the sincere reaction of tens of thousands of English men and women, whose contribution to the cause of justice and liberty has been in every way as worthy as that of the populations of London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Hull, and Barnsley—to take a few places where numerous residents would benefit, physically and spiritually, were they privileged to enjoy the open spaces and the more generous outlook of rural England, which still contains some of the most staple and balanced human elements the nation possesses. The rural district councils will be well able to tackle their post-war problems vigorously and efficiently. They will aim at procuring adequate and contented staffs, and any necessary review of their organisation will be carried out. In some directions they may require help, but no more than any alternative type of authority. Give them the powers and they will finish the job!

The rural communities expect their sons and daughters to return after the war to a tradition of freedom and initiative, with a similar degree of independence to that which is to be accorded to the overcrowded and politically-controlled conglomerations, whose clamourings must not be allowed to drown the voice of the countryside.

[In fairness to the Reconstruction Committee, we should point out that its report nowhere suggests (as Mr. Hobson implies) that existing county boroughs should "shoulder the additional heavy burden of providing modern public health services and housing development in rural villages many miles from their borders."]

extension bills have been promoted—but in only one case has an urban district been included in a borough against the wishes of its inhabitants, and there the rates in the urban district were higher than those in the borough.

Do not those facts provide a counter-blow to the Committee's attack on "the absence of public interest in the operation of local government in its present form"? Great stress is laid in paragraph 12 on the argument that sentiment and prestige have no relation to efficient administration, but I am convinced that these are important considerations. "Government of the people, by the people, for the people" must be the basis of government structure both local and national.

Boundaries were reviewed between 1931 and 1939 by county review orders under the Local Government Act, 1929. In addition, under Section 146 of the Local Government Act, 1933, the Minister of Health can require any county council, after the expiration of ten years from the completion of the first review, to review the circumstances of its county districts and consider whether it is "desirable" to effect any changes. This word "desirable" was also contained in Section 54 of the Local Government Act, 1888, and it is recognised as the statutory test of the merits of proposals for the extension of county boroughs.

The report mentions, as one of the defects, "lack of adequate machinery for co-operation between local authorities." This can hardly be true of county councils and county districts, for county councils take an intelligent interest in the activities of their districts and assist and encourage the progressive plans of district councils. Moreover, the county branches of the U.D.C.s and R.D.C.s Associations and of the various officers' associations, all tend to promote co-operation and uniformity without impairing the ideal of local self-government.

Further defects mentioned in the report are the division and overlapping of services, and maladjustment between areas and functions. To remedy these, the committee proposes to group rural areas into units, which would conduct the services delegated to them by the "all-purpose" authority, but would remain under the effective control of the latter. Provincial councils are also to be established to plan and co-ordinate certain services. Such councils would have no executive powers nor provide services, but their decisions would be binding on "all-purpose" authorities in their respective areas. Obviously, such a scheme is more involved and less intelligible to the citizen than the existing one. Paragraph 23 draws attention to the number of joint boards and committees. In my opinion, an improved local government structure can be developed, not by increasing the number of such bodies, but by extending the areas they serve. There would appear to be no reason why joint hospital boards, joint sewerage boards, gas and water boards, joint planning committees, and other joint committees should not be developed for the public advantage.

To sum up, I contend that the drastic measures proposed by the Reconstruction Committee are not warranted. Even what the report terms the major defect—"small local authorities lacking the population, financial resources and qualified staff to provide services of the standard and efficiency required to-day"—can be corrected by the proper use of existing legislation and machinery. Give the Local Government Act, 1933, a chance to operate, it will be adequate for the building of a new and improved local government structure.

'Brains Trust' on Reconstruction

Though we have space this month for only one of the four questions discussed at the last session of the NALGO "Brains Trust"—the others will be published next month—it is a topical one: Should NALGO concern itself with local government reconstruction and the efficiency of local government services?

SHOULD NALGO interest itself (a) in local government reconstruction or (b) in the efficiency of local government services; or should it regard such subjects as outside its proper function as a trade union?

MR. METCALFE.—My answer to both queries is an emphatic affirmative. Because we accept a salary, we are to be precluded from expressing opinions on the functions of the local government machine or on its efficiency? I cannot accept such a precept as being in the best interests of the general body of ratepayers.

MR. MILES.—NALGO is a trade union, which the dictionary defines as "an organised body of workmen in any trade, formed for the promotion and protection of their common interests." Don't our "common interests" include the securing of a better system of local government? But NALGO is also a body of men and women highly skilled in their profession—that of caring for their fellow creatures from cradle (and before) to grave. It is the duty of such a body to study local government in all its aspects and to make known its findings. Few have a greater knowledge of their subject.

MR. HARROLD.—Exactly!—as will be made clear if the question is put in another way: Is it right that the unique mass of knowledge and experience on local government administration, which is to be found in NALGO and its membership, should not be used in the discussion of local government reconstruction or the efficiency of local government services?

There can be only one answer to that—that it is in the public interest that the country should have the benefit of this national asset. I do not suggest that NALGO should interfere in matters which are best left to local politics, but I think it is appropriate for the Association to submit its views on the broad issues, particularly of administration, which arise in local government reconstruction. It is particularly interested also in the efficiency of the local government service. The reputation and status of the service depends upon its efficiency, and we who make up the service, again through our national organisation, should take our part.

I do not think that NALGO's interest in such matters would be rejected as biased. I think its views would be accepted by the public as those of skilled professional people engaged on the job.

MR. HARROLD.—If NALGO is to have any influence or prestige as a national organisation it must interest itself in local government reconstruction and efficiency. Both these questions must directly affect its individual members and no trade union could afford to ignore issues of such fundamental importance to its aims and objects.

MR. METCALFE.—In some quarters the interim report of the Reconstruction Committee has been described as an impertinent piece of presumption. One can imagine starched collars wilting and ejaculations of: "Gad, Sir, we should teach these upstarts their stations." But, surely, the problems of reconstruction are so many and varied as to be incapable of solution unless all interests likely to be affected are given full opportunity to make constructive suggestions. We should congratulate the N.E.C. on its appreciation of expediency, and its temerity, if temerity it be. Our most ungenerous critics will fail to find in the interim report any hint of axe-grinding and I sincerely hope that we shall not be swerved from our duty to the public by the carping criticisms of unprogressive factions.

MR. NORTON.—After what has been said, my view is going to sound very selfish and sordid, though I believe it is widely held. I consider that NALGO should interest itself in reconstruction and the efficiency of the service, but—and here's the point—always with

For its seventh session, the "Brains Trust" consists this month of:

- **F. H. HARROD**, Director of Education at Coventry, and Chairman of the National Executive Council.
- **C. A. W. ROBERTS**, Manager of Walton Hospital, Liverpool, and Senior Vice-President.
- **H. ALLEN**, Senior Clerk, Treasurer's Department, West Riding C.C., and Chairman of the Service of Conditions and Organisation Committee.
- **P. H. HARROLD**, Town Clerk of Hampstead; Hon. Solicitor for England, and Chairman of the Law and Parliamentary Committee.
- **H. NORTON**, Assistant Claims Superintendent, Transport Department, Sheffield; Chairman of the Sheffield branch, and a member of Yorkshire District Committee.
- **T. J. METCALFE**, Inspector of Weights and Measures, Smethwick; and Secretary of the Smethwick branch.
- **M. J. MILES**, Education Department, Coventry; and Editor of "Camera Principis," the Coventry branch magazine.
- **Miss M. HOWIE**, Transport Department, Glasgow, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Glasgow branch.
- **J. SIMONDS**, Acting General Secretary of NALGO.

Questions for the "Brains Trust" should be sent to the Editor, LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE, 27, Abingdon Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1.

the object, first and foremost, of bettering the status and conditions of local government officers. We are a trade union, maintained not by Government grant to investigate local government problems, but by the subscriptions of members whose prime and urgent need is improvement of their unsatisfactory standards.

If we look after the officers' interests, others will look after the interests of authorities and the community, and the final decisions are then likely to be fair to all parties; but if we, in an excess of idealistic self-abnegation, concentrate only on the common weal, even sometimes to our own disadvantage, no one else will bother about our interests, and the final result is likely to be less than fair to the officers.

MR. SIMONDS.—That's my opinion, too. NALGO is certainly interested in local government reconstruction, but it should not take any active part in it. Its main job, as Norton says, is the protection of the interests of its members. If it advocated any particular form of local government reconstruction involving the abolition of some types of existing local authorities, or at least some of their functions, many members of the Association, though possibly a minority of the total membership, would be adversely affected. In view of what we are fighting for in this war, can NALGO disregard the interests of such a minority?

There's another way of looking at it. If NALGO were to advocate a particular policy of reconstruction which was not acceptable to the Government of the day, the members might suffer. When, in 1928, the Government introduced a Bill which afterwards became the Local Government Act, 1929, providing for the abolition of Boards of Guardians, it was suggested that the Association representing Poor Law Officers should oppose the Bill, but wiser counsels prevailed. That Association took the line that it ought not to oppose Government policy, but that, if that policy

adversely affected Poor Law Officers, their interests should be safeguarded. The line then taken was entirely successful, and the provisions in the Local Government Act, 1929, relating to transfer and compensation of officers, have since been regarded as a model.

A similar situation may well arise soon after the present war. If NALGO keeps itself free from advocacy of any particular scheme of local government reconstruction, it will be able to speak with a stronger voice on behalf of those of its members who will be adversely affected by the reconstruction legislation.

MR. ALLEN.—I support Norton, too, and would view all proposals for reconstruction from the angle of how they might affect the officer. If they are good from that viewpoint and also from that of the community, by all means let us get on with them. NALGO's principal concern is to carry out its bread-and-butter policy, and whilst its members are perforce vitally concerned with problems of the reconstruction of local government and kindred subjects, the Association must never lose sight of and its grip upon that primary function.

MISS HOWIE.—I disagree, I'm afraid. Local government reconstruction is only a subsidiary of world reconstruction, and who can deny that all right thinking and principled people should be directing their minds to that? Far from being outside the sphere of a trade union, it is gloriously inside it.

In my view, the failure of our democratic system before the war—a failure which caused us to drift into war—was due in part to the determination of trade unions and other organisations to restrict their activities to what would benefit themselves. We lost that former zeal to benefit or raise the standard of living of the common man. We must take a wider view today—therefore, I say, let NALGO be in the van, equipped with a positive, inspired, and concrete plan.

MR. ROBERTS.—In my opinion, also, the answer to the question is certainly in the affirmative, and by so answering, the efficiency of the local government service can be increased.

MR. SIMONDS.—I had almost forgotten the question about efficiency. I think every member of NALGO will agree that it is the duty of the Association and its members to promote this efficiency. The greater the efficiency, the better the service and the better the conditions of those who serve.

MR. METCALFE.—There can be no question of that—and it has been NALGO policy for many years. By its educational policy and the facilities which it affords, by its insistence on minimum educational qualifications for new entrants, and by its recommendations on promotion according to merit, the Association has laid the foundations of efficiency in the service. It has encouraged the building up on those foundations of an unassailable edifice of integrity, a true conception of public duty and of loyal service. Lack of interest in efficiency must breed inefficiency. Inefficiency rightly invokes public criticism. Of whom? I think the questioner knows the answer.

A Local Government Exhibition

AT its meeting on March 13, the National Executive Council approved plans for the preparation of a NALGO exhibition of local government, composed mainly of photographs of the various services in action, which could be loaned to branches, local authorities, libraries, schools, youth clubs, and organisations of all kinds, and used in connection with courses in civics for troops, etc. The public relations officer will be grateful if any members knowing of the existence of suitable material will write to him at 27, Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1.

A Varied Menu for Conference

MEETING in London on March 13, the National Executive Council approved the draft of its annual report for 1942 and the arrangements for this year's Conference.

As already announced, the Conference is to be held at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 (near Ludgate Circus) on Whit Saturday, June 12, and Whit Monday, June 14. Meetings of the ancillaries will be held on Whit Sunday, and at 2 p.m. on that day there will be a special Conference service at the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

The preliminary agenda, consisting of notices of motion submitted by branches, district committees, and the N.E.C., is given below. To it have to be added amendments to the notices of motion and to the annual report, which may be submitted by branches and districts up to April 15. The whole agenda is subject to consolidation and co-ordination by the agenda sub-committee. Amendments will be published in the May LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

1. Opening of Conference.
2. To confirm the proceedings of the Conference held on May 25 and 26, 1942.
3. Benevolent and Orphan Fund—Announcement of amounts received from districts and winners of trophies and diplomas.
4. Declaration of result of election of Council and Honorary Officers.
5. Appointment of Auditors for the year 1943.

Notice of Motion by the National Executive Council.

That Messrs. Jackson, Pixley & Co., Chartered Accountants, of Kent House, Telegraph Street, London, E.C.2, be appointed the Association's auditors for the year 1943, and that a fee of 750 guineas be paid to them for their services.

6. Appointment of Scrutineers.
7. Honorary Treasurer's Financial Statements.
8. Annual Report of the National Executive Council.
9. Eligibility for Membership.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee.

That any person coming within Rule 4 of the Association, whose application for membership is refused by the branch, the branch secretary shall immediately call that person's attention specifically to the Association's Rule 55 (a).

10. Temporary Officers—Voting.

Notice of Motion by the Whitley and Monk-seaton branch.

This branch views with increasing seriousness the possible effects consequent upon the absorption into NALGO of large numbers of temporary local government officers, and the following motion is submitted for consideration by the N.E.C.:

"This branch recommends that the rights of the temporary officer member of NALGO to vote on matters of NALGO policy, or of any permanent policy of this Association in which the temporary officer member has no permanent interest (as, for example, local government reorganization or reconstruction, etc.) should be reviewed. In the opinion of this branch, the right to vote of the temporary officer member should be restricted to matters of a purely local or temporary nature, in order to best serve the interests of the permanent local government officer."

11. Affiliation to the Trades Union Congress.

Notice of Motion by the East Midland district committee.

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Council to take all necessary steps to carry into effect the wishes of the majority of members voting in the ballot to determine the question of affiliation to the Trades Union Congress.

12. Notice of Motion by the Southall branch.

That in the event of the ballot which is being taken on the question of affiliation to the Trades Union Congress showing a majority of members to be in favour of such affiliation, the National Executive Council be directed to take early steps to implement this decision.

13. Notice of Motion by the Halifax branch.

That if the ballot of the members of the Association results in a majority vote for affiliation to the Trades Union Congress, the Conference instructs the National Executive

NALGO SEEKS THREE ORGANISERS

The National Association of Local Government Officers invites application for the post of (male) temporary organizing officer. There are three vacancies to be filled. The successful candidates will be required to carry out the work of organizing local government officers in the areas to which they may be assigned, to attend meetings, and to represent the Association before local authorities and other bodies when required. Organizing experience, energy, enthusiasm, and ability in public speaking are essential qualifications, and a knowledge of local government, its functions and procedure, is desirable. Salary will be at the rate of £360 p.a., rising by two annual increments of £15 to £390, plus a cost of living bonus (at present 13s. p.w.). The appointment will be subject to one month's notice on either side. Travelling and reasonable subsistence allowances will be granted. Applications, giving full particulars of age, qualifications, and experience, and accompanied by copies of not more than three recent testimonials, must reach the Acting General Secretary, NALGO, 27, Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1, not later than first post on 17th April, 1943. Canvassing members of the Council will be a disqualification.

Council to take all necessary steps to carry such affiliation into effect.

14. Notice of Motion by the Hertfordshire branch.

That until such time as the members at present serving in H.M. Forces can again interest themselves in NALGO policy as members in local government employ, the question of NALGO's membership to the T.U.C. be postponed, whatever the result of the present ballot.

15. Report of the Reconstruction Committee.

Notice of Motion by the South West Gloucestershire branch.

1. That this Conference, while recognising the recommendations of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee may be worthy of application to thickly populated industrial areas, holds the opinion that the proposals affecting areas which are wholly or mainly rural are impracticable.

2. That the National Executive Council be instructed to appoint a special committee, composed mainly of members of the Association with special knowledge of local government in county districts predominantly rural in character, to consider further the recommendations affecting such areas and report.

3. That the findings of such special committee be published in like manner to the interim report.

16. Notice of Motion by the West Lancashire branch.

That the action of the National Executive Council in publishing the interim report of the Reconstruction Committee without taking sufficient steps to ensure that the Press and public would appreciate that the report is not the considered opinion of the Association, but merely the view of a few individual members, is against the best interests of NALGO and will have a harmful effect on the value of the Association in a very large number of areas, and that the National Executive Council now be instructed to give the widest possible publicity on this point.

17. Notice of Motion by the West Lancashire branch.

That in the opinion of this Conference no report of a similar nature to that recently published by the Reconstruction Committee should be handed to the public until after consideration by the branches and proper adoption by the Association itself.

18. Notice of Motion by the National Executive Council.

That this Conference welcomes the plan for social security recommended in the Beveridge Report, but is strongly of the opinion that the plan would be administered more efficiently and economically through local security departments of local authorities.

19. Beveridge Report.

Notice of Motion by the Scottish district committee.

That this Conference welcomes the Beveridge Report in its main essentials as a sincere effort to establish the social welfare of the people, but that in urging the Government to adopt and carry out its general principles at the earliest possible moment, requests that adequate provision be made for the protection of all local government officers affected by its proposals.

20. Notice of Motion by the Glasgow branch.

That this Association welcomes the Beveridge Report as being a step forward in the social services of this country and urges the Government to implement the proposals of the report immediately.

21. Notice of Motion by the Kent County Officers' branch.

That this Conference, representing over 120,000 local government officers, supports the plan for social security embodied in the Beveridge Report.

22. Notice of Motion by the Fulham branch.

That this Association welcomes the principles of the Beveridge Report; affirms its willingness to do everything possible to ensure their successful application; and urges the Government to introduce legislation as soon as possible to implement them.

23. Compensation for loss of office.

Notice of Motion by the West Cornwall branch.

That the National Executive Council be asked to see that, if possible, provision is made in any legislation for the reform of local government for the service of an officer recognised for superannuation purposes under Section 12 (6) of the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, to be also recognised for the purposes of a claim for compensation in respect of any loss of office.

24. Organization of Nursing Staffs.

Notice of Motion by the Scottish district committee.

That this Conference resolves that a contemporary organization be set up within the framework of the Association, having for its purpose the organization of all nursing staffs, whether in local authority institutions, voluntary hospitals, or in private practice, and that the Constitution of the National Association of Local Government Officers be amended in order to give effect to this resolution.

25. Recruitment of Nursing Staffs.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee.

That this Conference welcomes the report of the Rushcliffe Committee, and the action of the National Executive Council, in preparing a leaflet entitled "An Appeal to Nursing Staffs in Local Government," and urges that branches be instructed to circulate copies of the aforesaid leaflet to all members of nursing staffs in municipal hospitals and/or institutions within the jurisdiction of their local authority with the recommendation that permission be obtained to follow up the leaflet by calling meetings in the hospitals and/or institutions.

26. Scholarships for Nursing Staffs.

Notice of Motion by the Dunbartonshire branch.

That this Conference disapproves of the action of the National Executive Council in providing a scheme of assisted training and scholarships for nurses within the Association without referring the matter to Conference.

27. Decisions of Whitley Councils.

Notice of Motion by the Sunderland branch.

That, following the decision of the House of Lords in the "Bolton" Appeal case, the N.E.C. be instructed to take all requisite steps to provide that the decisions of the Whitley councils shall be binding on all parties.

28. Uniform Scales of Salaries and Conditions of Service.

Notice of Motion by the Haslingden branch.

That in view of the absence of agreement and uniformity throughout the country as to salaries and conditions of service, the National Executive Council be instructed to press for the compulsory adoption by all local authorities of one uniform scale of salaries and one uniform code of conditions of service.

29. Recruitment, status, and conditions of employment of Local Government staffs.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee and the Southwark branch.

That, having regard to the character of the duties placed upon local authorities and their officers, and having in mind the development and reorganization of the social services likely to take place when peace is restored, this Conference is of opinion that it is essential in the public interests that the local government service should be reconstituted so as to ensure that the methods of recruitment, status, and conditions governing employment in such service are up to the standard envisaged by the recommendations of the Hadow Report.

That the National Executive Council be requested to take whatever steps are possible to implement the foregoing.

30. Acceptance of Articled Pupils.

Notice of Motion by the Manchester branch.

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Council to urge all associations of local authorities to discourage the practice of accepting as articled pupils persons who are not members of the local government service.

31. Equality of Opportunity for Men and Women.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee.

This Conference urges the National Executive Council to implement the Association's declared policy of equality of opportunity for women in the service by working for the removal of the marriage bar imposed by some authorities in all areas where such bar operates.

32. Equal Cost-of-living Bonus for men and women.

Notice of Motion by the Edinburgh branch.

That this Association approves of the principle of equal cost-of-living bonus to male and female officers and uses every endeavour to have this principle adopted.

33. Pensions for Dependents of Members of H.M. Forces.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee.

That this Conference is of opinion that pensions should be granted to the dependants of all members of H.M. Forces who die whilst serving, whether death is caused by wounds or illness, and that the National Executive Council be requested to urge H.M. Government to introduce legislation to ensure that pensions are payable to dependants in the cases mentioned, and also to cover all men and women invalided out of the services.

34. Superannuation.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee and the Acton branch.

1. That the National Executive Council be asked to report on the desirability of endeavouring to secure the amendment of the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, in order:

(i) to give an officer or servant the option of retiring on pension at age 60 years provided he has then completed a minimum of 30 years' service.

(ii) to give an officer or servant the option of retiring on pension at any time after completing 40 years' service.

(iii) to introduce such other changes as may appear reasonable.

2. That in considering desirable amendments to the Local Government Superannuation

IMPORTANT DATES FOR CONFERENCE

THE attention of branches is drawn to following NALGO Conference dates:

April 15—Last date for receipt of amendments to notices of motion for the conference agenda.

May 1—Last date for receipt of nominations (which must be signed by two other members) for the NALGO Building Society Committee of Management and of notices of motion for the annual general meeting of the Building Society.

May 28—Issue of final conference agenda; last date for branches to notify division of voting strength.

June 12 and 14—Conference (9.30 a.m.—12.30 p.m. and 2.30—5.0 p.m. on each day.)

June 13—9.30 a.m., "Provident Society A.G.M.;" 11.0 a.m., "Logonia A.G.M.;" 2.0 p.m., "Special Conference Service at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields;" 3.45 p.m., "Building Society A.G.M.;" 5.15 p.m., "Approved Society A.G.M."

All notices and nominations should be addressed to the General Secretary, NALGO Centre, Croyde, Braunton, Devon.

Act, 1937, the attention of the National Executive Council be especially drawn to the Teachers' Superannuation Act, 1925, some of the provisions of which might with advantage to the officer be embodied in local government superannuation legislation.

35. Compensation for Injury or Death.

Notice of Motion by the Fulham Branch.

That the National Executive Council be instructed:

(i) to take steps at the earliest opportunity to secure the incorporation in legislation of powers for all local authorities similar to those contained in section 92 of the London Government Act, 1939 (relating to the payment of compensation for injury to or death of their officers arising out of the duties of their employment); and

(ii) in the meantime to take all possible steps to encourage local authorities to make the payment of such compensation a condition of service so as to enable them legally to insure against the liability thus undertaken.

36. Co-operation with Associations for Technical Workers.

Notice of Motion by the Fulham branch.

That in view of the considerable number of local government officers who are members of associations catering for technical workers, the National Executive Council be instructed to enter into discussion with such associations in order to facilitate dual membership of and co-operation between NALGO and those associations.

37. Local Government Publications.

Notice of Motion by the West Cornwall branch.

That the National Executive Council be instructed to:

(i) purchase a local government publication or publications; or

(ii) make arrangements to establish a weekly journal relating to local government matters.

38. Admission to Holiday Camps.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee.

That this Conference urges that when consideration is given to the reopening of the holiday camps, an alteration be made in the rules enabling a dependent relative of a member to be accepted in the same way as a member's wife is accepted.

39. Pooling of Conference Railway Fares.

Notice of Motion by the Whitley and Monk-seaton branch.

This branch recommends that the railway or other travel fares of branch delegates to

Conference should be pooled and so afford a simple and equitable method of apportioning fares over all branches in the country.

40. Election of National Executive Council and Honorary Officers, 1944-45.

Notice of Motion by the Wigan branch.

1. That an election of the honorary officers and members of the Council be held prior to the Annual Conference in 1944.

2. That, in the event of an election being held, it shall be by ballot, by which each member of the Association is given an opportunity individually to record his votes.

3. That if it is found necessary, owing to Government regulations, to depart from the procedure whereby each member of the Association is given an opportunity individually to record his votes, then such system be re-introduced at the earliest possible opportunity.

41. Representation on the National Executive Council

Notice of Motion by the Darwen branch.

That the representation on the National Executive Council of members of under 35 years of age shall be not less than one-third.

42. Subscriptions.

Notice of Motion by the Metropolitan district committee.

That, notwithstanding the resolution of the 1942 Conference with regard to an increase of membership subscriptions, and in view of the urgent need for increased income to meet post-war reorganization, and the necessity for the appointment of additional paid organizers, and the consequent additional staff to carry out the intensive programme envisaged by the service conditions and organization committee, and in order to meet the additional expense involved thereby, this Conference resolves:

That Rule 9 (a) and (b) be amended to provide for the following revised scale of subscriptions to operate from November 1, 1943:

Salary (annual)	Subscription (monthly)	Salary (annual)	Subscription (monthly)
Up to £100 ...	1s. 3d.	£351-£450 ...	3s. 6d.
£100-£150 ...	1s. 6d.	£451-£550 ...	3s. 6d.
£151-£200 ...	1s. 9d.	£551-£750 ...	4s. 6d.
£201-£250 ...	2s. 0d.	£751-£1,000 ...	4s. 6d.
£251-£300 ...	2s. 6d.	Over £1,000 ...	5s. 0d.
£301-£350 ...	2s. 6d.		

Retired Members:

Receiving superannuation up to £300 p.a. ... 5s. p.a.

Receiving superannuation over £300 p.a. ... 10s. p.a.

43. Notice of Motion by the South Eastern district committee and Kent County Officers' branch.

1. That the decision reached at the Annual Conference, 1942, to defer consideration of the question of revising the existing scale of Association membership subscriptions until the end of the war, be rescinded.

2. That this Conference, appreciating the need for an increased subscription income for carrying on the work of the Association during, and, in an expanded degree after, the war, hereby authorises, as a temporary measure, an increase as from November 1, 1943, in all the subscription rates (except that relating to retired members) of twenty per cent.

44. Notice of Motion by the Croydon branch.

That, having regard to the inadvisability of increasing the subscriptions of all members, including temporary members and members absent on war service, and in view of the urgent need of building up a specific reserve for the purpose of meeting the expenses of dealing with post-war problems, including the employment of a greater number of expert negotiators, this Conference approves the adoption of a compulsory levy on all permanent officers not in H.M. Forces of 3d. per month for officers in receipt of basic salaries up to and including £250 per annum and of 6d. per month for those in receipt of basic salaries exceeding £250 per annum.

45. Notice of Motion by the Halifax branch.

This Conference, recognizing the need for an increase in the organizing staff of the Association, instructs the National Executive Council

to prepare a scheme including, if necessary, increase in subscription rates to cover the increased cost and submit the scheme to the 1944 Conference.

46. Subscriptions to the Benevolent and Orphan Fund.

Notice of Motion by the West Ham branch.

That this Conference considers that membership of the Association should automatically include membership of the B. & O. Fund and that the ordinary membership subscriptions should be amended to incorporate a prescribed contribution to the Fund; further, that the National Executive Council be instructed to make provision accordingly when the revision of members' subscriptions is next under consideration.

47. Notice of Motion by the Southall branch.

That this Conference is of the opinion that the existing voluntary contributions payable to the B. & O. Fund should be made compulsory upon all members of the Association.

48. Subscriptions of Members on War Service.

Notice of Motion by the Hertfordshire branch.

That respect should be shown to members in H.M. Forces by their membership of NALGO permitted without subscription.

49. Notice of Motion by the Chester City branch.

That members of this Association serving in H.M. Forces should be relieved of payment of their subscriptions for the duration of their war service, and that the appropriate steps be taken to reserve their rights as members of the Association.

50. Notice of Motion by the Bucks County branch.

That the present rule in regard to payment of subscriptions by members on war service, based upon the amount of supplementary pay received from the local authority, be rescinded, and that the following rule be adopted:

Subscriptions for members on war service shall be 5s. per annum irrespective of the amount received in salary from the local authority or war service pay; the payment of this nominal subscription to entitle such members to all the benefits of full membership.

51. Notice of Motion by the Luton and District branch.

That this Conference resolves, in order to achieve a measure of uniformity and equity in the levy of subscriptions from members of the Association who may temporarily leave the local government service during the period of the present emergency in order to undertake war service ("war service" being defined as in the Local Government Staffs (War Service) Act, 1939), the rules of the Association be amended so as to provide that any such member may retain full membership of the Association upon payment of a nominal subscription of 2s. 6d. per annum.

52. Addition to Rules—Ballot of Members.

Notice of Motion by the Leeds branch.

That the result of any ballot of members taken by resolution of Conference shall be binding on the Association if two-thirds or more of the total number of votes cast are in favour of the proposition.

53. Annual Conference.

Notice of Motion by the National Executive Council.

That this Conference authorizes the National Executive Council to decide the date, time and place of the 1944 Annual Conference.

54. Induction of President.

55. Any other competent business.

PRESIDENT RESIGNS

Opposed to Reconstruction Committee's Report

Other matters dealt with by the National Executive Council at its meeting on March 13 included:

Resignation of the President.—The following letter from Lt.-Col. E. J. Stead, President of NALGO, was submitted by the chairman, Mr. F. H. Harrod:

"As I was unable to agree with the Report of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee and was not accorded the right of submitting a Reservation or Minority Report, and as the National Executive Council have accepted the Report and caused its wide publication, I have given careful and unhurried consideration to my position as President of the Association.

"The Reconstruction Report is one of the most important works undertaken by NALGO during recent years, and I feel that it is in the best interests of the Association that the Presidency should no longer be held by one who is so much opposed to the results of the investigations of the Reconstruction Committee. I want to be free to join in branch and district committee discussion on the Report; I cannot feel this freedom and at the same time exercise proper loyalty to the National Executive Council's decisions.

"The subject of reconstruction is bound to be raised at Conference, and there should be then in the chair a president who will be free to support the views of the Reconstruction Committee.

"I have decided, therefore, to retire forthwith from the office of President and now send you, as Chairman of the National Executive Council, my resignation."

Mr. Harrod said that every member of the Council would share the regret he felt when he read Col. Stead's letter. Both he and the immediate past president, Mr. J. L. Holland, had done their utmost to persuade Col. Stead to sink his personal feelings and to withdraw his resignation, but they had failed to move him, and in these circumstances it appeared that the Council had no course but to accept the resignation, coupled with an expression of the regret of every member that Col. Stead had felt it necessary to take this action.

Mr. E. R. Davies urged that a further attempt be made to persuade Col. Stead to reconsider his decision. Most members would feel that there was no need for him to take so extreme a step—for it was one thing to resign from the Reconstruction Committee, but another to resign from the Presidency. The issue behind the President's decision was the fact that the Reconstruction Committee had decided not to allow notes of reservation or minority reports. As one who had been a party to that decision, but had since resigned from the Reconstruction Committee, Mr. Davies felt that the Committee had made a mistake, and he blamed himself for having given way to the views of the majority. The difficulty might be overcome, he felt, were the Council to suggest to the Reconstruction Committee that when it issued its final report it should agree to publish minority views and notes of reservation.

The Council, however, negatived the amendment and agreed to accept the President's resignation.

Testimonial to General Secretary.—On the motion of Mr. T. Nolan, the Council unanimously agreed to organise a testimonial fund, to which branches and individual members should be invited to contribute, to commemorate the unique services to NALGO of Mr. L. Hill as general secretary since 1909. Details will be sent to branches and Mr. Hill will be asked to decide the purposes to which the fund shall be put.

T.U.C. Affiliation Ballot.—In view of some doubt as to the validity and effect, under the Rules of the Association, of the ballot on affiliation to the T.U.C., taken on the instructions of the 1942 Conference, the opinion of Counsel had been obtained. Counsel held, it was reported, that:

The National Executive Council had ample power under the Rules to take a ballot; No valid objection could be raised to the taking of a ballot;

Since the question of affiliation to the T.U.C. is one of general policy, which may be decided only by a vote of Conference under Rule 29, the N.E.C. has no power to act

upon the result of the ballot without a direction from Conference; and

One Conference cannot bind another, therefore the 1943 Conference may or may not act upon the result of the ballot—though no doubt it would give weight to it.

"Rushcliffe" Report.—The report of the Rushcliffe Committee on Nurses' Salaries (of which a summary appeared in LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE last month) was warmly welcomed, and the Council adopted with acclamation a resolution expressing its thanks and appreciation of the magnificent work accomplished by the three NALGO representatives on the Committee—Mr. C. A. W. Roberts, who was chairman of the nurses' panel, Mr. H. Allen, and Mr. A. G. Bolton. Mr. Roberts, expressing thanks on behalf of his colleagues and himself, said they felt proud at the result of the committee's work. Critics of the report—of whom there were some in the local government service—failed to realise, he thought, how difficult had been the committee's task in trying to achieve some co-ordination in a vast profession that had never organised itself, and how substantial had been its achievement in view of the lack of consideration given to nurses in the past. Some anomalies were still likely to be found, and Mr. Roberts suggested that all criticisms of the detailed application of the report should be sent to Headquarters, where they could be codified and dealt with.

The primary criticism of the report, Mr. Roberts continued, was that the Committee's proposals had resulted in too low salaries for the "bottom dog." Its policy, however, had been a deliberate one, based on the guiding principle that nursing must be made a profession in which women could make a satisfactory career. They felt it important not to offer too high a salary to the student nurse, but to improve salaries in the higher ranges—and especially to provide an adequate salary for the ward sister. That had been achieved, and the ward sister at the end of her career would draw pension on a salary of £300.

He agreed that the Committee had hardly been fair to the administrators of institutions. There they had been faced with the age-old difficulty of the married woman in a job—and had been compelled to agree to lower scales for institution matrons. On that point NALGO's policy should be—as had been rightly urged in LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE—that half a loaf was better than no bread, but that the Association should not rest content until it had secured the whole loaf.

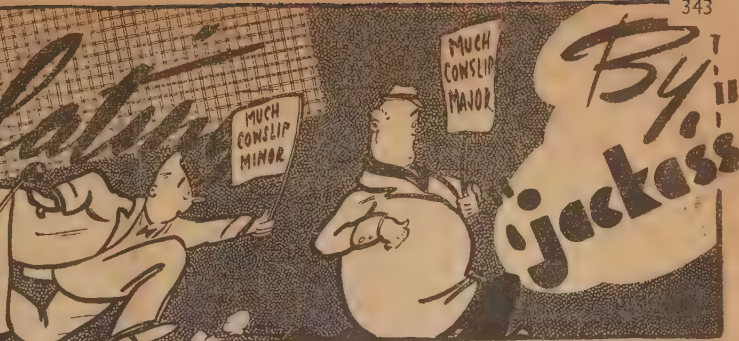
Mr. Roberts paid a warm tribute to his colleagues on the Committee, Messrs. Allen and Bolton. They had worked together as a team and had, he thought, done much to convince the employers of the good faith and greatness of NALGO. The Rushcliffe Committee hoped to report very soon on rates of pay for public health nurses, district nurses, and male nurses.

Temporary Organisers.—In view of the strenuous conditions under which some of the divisional organisers are now working, the Council decided to approve the appointment of three temporary assistant organisers, one to be sent to the Manchester office and two to be attached to Headquarters, whence they could be sent as needed to different parts of the country. An advertisement for these appointments appears on page 340.

New Honorary Treasurer.—The Council unanimously approved the recommendation of a special sub-committee that Mr. S. Whitehead, borough treasurer of Hammersmith, be appointed Honorary treasurer from April 1, 1943, in succession to Mr. W. H. Legh-Smith, who has resigned, and that Mr. Whitehead be nominated for election to this office at the Annual Conference.

Hon. Solicitor for Scotland.—It was agreed to nominate Mr. Robert McGill, county clerk, Moray and Nairn, as hon. solicitor for Scotland, in succession to the late Mr. G. S. Fraser.

Contemplation Conference



I AM not the man; I hope, to impute base motives to my colleagues without sure and ample cause, but I cannot help wondering what the connection is between the date of our Annual Conference and the resurgence of vitality which unfailingly occurs in our branch executive committee at Much Cowslip about March each year. The attendance improves noticeably; members emphasise their keen interest in the Association's activities by ostentatiously reading the Reconstruction Committee's report, the Rushcliffe report, or even—occasionally—the minutes of the District Committee; others, who have sat in torpid silence for months while the Clerk decided the branch's business, rise like Jack-in-boxes on the slightest pretexts, speak at inordinate length, move altogether unnecessary motions, and generally place themselves in the public eye as much as possible. It may be the Spring. It may be merely coincidental that this frenzy of activity occurs annually at this time. Or it may be—loath as I am to suggest it—self-advertisement in the hope of being elected to represent the branch at Conference.

One would think that our executive committee, normally so quick to see through the veneer to the plywood, would be unmoved by such tactics—but alas, no! On several occasions members unprincipled enough to resort to these despicable manoeuvres would have been elected but for the fact that the Clerk and I count the votes and declare the result. Thus we have been able to ensure that Much Cowslip will be represented this year, as in every year since we took office, by two men who have the interests of the Association genuinely at heart—ourselves. To do so this year we simply read the ballot result upside-down.

At one time there had been a difficulty about our both going, as the N.E.C.'s decision to limit the number of delegates classed Much Cowslip as entitled to one only. What we did—and I gladly pass over the suggestion to other small branches—was to divide ourselves into two branches—Much Cowslip Major and Much Cowslip Minor. The Clerk will naturally represent Major and I Minor. Needless to add—though we shall conceal any hint of this from Headquarters—the apparent schism is purely temporary and we shall forget our imaginary differences and amalgamate as soon as Conference is over. Lest anyone think our device verges on the deceptive, I need only point out that otherwise one of us could not have attended, which was unthinkable.

At the executive meeting which elected us as delegates, or rather at which we were appointed, we also considered what motions the branch might submit for inclusion in the agenda. The Clerk urged that any proposition should be short, to lessen the field for amendment, should either state a known fact or urge the N.E.C. to do something they already had done or were only too anxious to do, and should in any case be so phrased that, before any positive action could be taken, Conference would have to be consulted again. Purely as

an illustration he instanced a motion: "That the N.E.C. be requested to consider and report upon the possibility of the formation of a standing committee to sit indefinitely for the purpose of examining and reporting upon the advisability of creating a Local Government Joint Advisory Council so constituted as shall seem appropriate and for such purposes as may from time to time be deemed desirable." Such a resolution, though short perhaps to the point of curtness, had the intangibility to ensure general acceptance coupled with a certain dignity and grandiosity of purpose which should endear it to any Conference. Warning to his subject, the Clerk considered possible opposition. To the inevitable faint-hearted counselling caution, one could reply that the N.E.C. were asked only to consider and report. To the practical sceptic who inquired what the proposed Local Government Joint Advisory Council—a nicely rounded phrase—would do, the final clause was a sufficient retort. To the N.E.C., the prospect of converting any such Council into an appropriate body for purposes they had for a long time deemed desirable would ensure their support. Finally, were a National Council of any kind to be formed during the next ten years, as seemed inevitable, Much Cowslip could justly claim the credit. Forgetting that he had quoted the motion purely as an example, the Clerk put it to the vote and it was unanimously adopted.

Postlebury propounded his annual motion calling for increased support for the B. & O. Fund and announcing his faith—ill-supported by past experience—that local government officers would never allow the Fund's activities to be restricted for lack of money. This was carried by acclamation, none clapping louder than the non-contributors.

Blatherpatch followed with what the Clerk afterwards condemned as a "farrago of Marxian nonsense" urging: "That this Conference confirms the result of the ballot,

and directs the N.E.C. to apply immediately for affiliation to the T.U.C." He pointed out that, since only Conference can take decisions on policy, the result of the referendum could not be accepted without a confirmatory motion.

Twitted on his apparent certainty that the result of the vote would suit his motion, he candidly admitted that Llangobackanforard branch would, by arrangement, table an amendment to substitute the word "rejects" for "confirms" to provide against that risk. He made the mistake of referring to his colleagues on the executive as "workers," which they naturally resented and which, in my opinion, caused the defeat of his proposal.

A tentative effort by a jocular member to move a resolution providing that "the difference in rates of earnings between male and female officers performing identical duties with equal efficiency shall be such as will provide the same standard of living for both, taking into account their respective responsibilities," was rejected, on the obvious ground that we could not, as an Association, urge a reduction of salaries for our women members, and the alternative of obtaining substantial increases for all married male officers was impracticable. Miss Legge rose to speak on this, but was greeted with such sustained cheering that nobody heard what she said.

As the executive were obviously in a good humour I ventured to move: "That this Conference views as totally inadequate the provincial staff of the Association, and urges the appointment of one full-time regional officer to every three thousand members." I touched on the difficulty many members have in obtaining advice and assistance when they have had a "raw deal" from Council or chief officer in a branch where appeasement in its worst sense was the accepted policy—not, I hastened to add, that such a situation could possibly arise in Much Cowslip while we had the benefit—the inestimable benefit—of the Clerk's support as our Chairman (confused murmuring and some laughter).

Blatherpatch, apparently still smarting from his defeat on the affiliation issue, moved an amendment adding a pledge to meet the inevitable cost by an increase of subscriptions, but a roar of disapproval made it clear that his amendment was lost. My motion, however, was approved subject to the substitution of "demands" for "urges."

There was a general desire to put forward a motion expressing admiration for all our gallant allies, naming them all from Russia and the United States to Ethiopia and the Duchy of Luxembourg. When we came to draft the resolution, however, no one could remember whether it was Iran or Iraq which recently joined us, so we had to leave it in confident anticipation that someone else will do it for us.

At least six other members seemed to have motions to put forward, but as a sudden increase in activity in the bar parlour below heralded the approach of closing time, we adjourned hurriedly—to the bar parlour.



"We adjourned hurriedly..."

RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Mr. E. R. Davies' Resignation

I HAVE received inquiries from some of my colleagues as to "whether the county council representatives, on the NALGO Reconstruction Committee have assented to the recommendations" contained in the interim report.

I must make it clear that I did not accept the appointment to the committee as a county council representative, but I should like it to be known that I was unable to assent to the report as finally drawn and that, as the majority of the committee were apparently not prepared to agree to notes of reservation or to indicate that differences of opinion existed, I had no alternative but to tender my resignation from the Committee, and this I did in a letter to the National Executive Council on January 13.

I agree with much that is in the report, but I am unable to agree (*inter alia*) with the recommendations for (i) a permanent Boundary Commission empowered to act on its own initiative (paragraph 58), (ii) the establishment of provincial councils (paragraphs 59 to 67) which, as outlined, are nothing more than regional councils under another name, or (iii) the suggested abolition (by inference) of 100 boroughs (paragraph 70). I heard nothing in the evidence nor did I read anything in the material placed before the committee to make me form the opinion that because an authority is small it must necessarily be inefficiently administered.

The real weakness of our present system lies rather in its division of functions in administrative counties between independent authorities, but it would take too much of your space to develop my own views on this complicated but interesting subject.

If I had not received these inquiries I should not have troubled you with this letter, but I trust that in the circumstances you will be able to publish it.

Shire Hall, E. R. DAVIES, N.E.C.
Reading.

WOMEN'S DEMANDS

Fair Play for Mothers

IT would be easier to sink the British Navy than to douse Britannias like Miss G. S. Mitchell and "Immortal Helen." If only they were mothers, how much stronger our "Home Fleet" would be! Lack of manoeuvring space prevents me from firing broadsides in reply. I would, however, ask Miss Mitchell to be concerned not only about her "younger sisters—ill-paid drudges" in offices, but also about her more mature sisters who slave and sacrifice themselves, without pay and without holidays, in carrying out their duty as mothers.

Because I pleaded for the raising of the status of mothers, rather than additional pocket money for spinsters, "Immortal Helen" should not accuse me of wanting "to shove them back into the kitchen and close the door quickly." I want mothers to be so free from financial strain that they have real equality, including the means to travel—if not abroad at least to conferences. I do recognise the "enormous political, power of women," but I am only "terrified" at the power being wrongly used, and selfishly used, by childless women. It is not just more women we need in politics: we want more mothers in local and central Government, and in every sphere of educational and social work. We need more fathers, too—but surely the spinsters can talk kindly to the eligible bachelors on this matter?

To "19-year-old British Maid" I say: "Good luck, and may your sweetheart soon be back." Anyone who is sincerely concerned about the "health and happiness of the generations to be created" cannot be lacking in "marriageability." What you must fight for is the recognition by the State that

"marriageability" is the highest qualification for citizenship. Then you will have less need to worry about man's apparent injustice. Maybe there are as many unjust and selfish men as there are unjust and selfish women. But, speaking after twenty-five years of family life, I think that most married men regret that they are financially prevented from giving their wives (and children) the square deal they deserve. In spite of this, married life—if it is

READERS' FORUM

Letters for the May Journal must reach the Editor, 27, Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1, by April 15.

blessed with children—is the normal life and the one most worth living.

In conclusion, I venture to prophesy that, within the not-so-distant future, we shall see two very desirable changes in this country—the teaching of "parentcraft" as part of an educational system based on family living, and not only the complete removal of the marriage bar, but the end of an economic system which (as Dr. Enid Charles says in her book "The Twilight of Parenthood") "Puts a price upon parenthood and confers a social prestige upon sterility by ensuring the social promotion of persons with low reproductive vitality." 2, Stanley-road, FRANK E. KNIGHT.
Ashford, Middx.

NALGO SUBSCRIPTIONS

Increase Premature To-day?

YOUR editorial note in answer to "Lint" in the March Journal, expressing the view that members are unlikely to get higher salaries until they have made NALGO stronger "by giving it more income," rather tends to suggest that finance is the open sesame to all things.

Admittedly, finance has to be considered, but it is submitted that to increase the scale of subscriptions during the war, when the members in the Forces are unable to express their views, and also whilst it is wellnigh impossible to spend the increased revenue on extra organising staff (because staff is almost unobtainable), is likely to end with a drop in membership caused by the increase in subscriptions and the inability of the existing organising staff to increase its present efforts.

To avoid this possibility of losing existing, as well as potential, members, would it not be more to the point to use some of NALGO's resources, already totalling £6 million, to improve its organisation, if that is possible? In the February Journal you published a "Farewell to the General Secretary," in which it was made clear that NALGO's strength had been built upon Mr. Hill's "enthusiasm and indomitable courage," and you made clear also that more than once the Association's funds were insufficient to pay his small salary. It is submitted that NALGO should follow this lead and give its services to local government officers, trusting that its enterprise will be rewarded by an appreciation amongst such officers of the value of membership. Such an attitude of mind would, incidentally, increase the revenue of NALGO.

"VERITAS."

Practically all "NALGO's resources, already totalling £6 million" represent the investments of members in the Building, Provident and Approved Societies and in Logonia, and are therefore not available for the expansion of its trade union activities. These can be financed only from subscriptions. That the N.E.C. does not share "Veritas's" view that the organising staff cannot be increased to-day is shown by its decision to appoint four more organisers—one a woman—immediately. "Appreciation by local government officers of the value of membership," valuable as it is, will neither feed nor clothe them nor meet the heavy cost of their activities.

MEANS TEST FOR PENSIONERS

Tactfully Administered

WHILE I agree with "Pilgrim" that the basic old age pension of 10s. a week is totally inadequate, I can hardly agree with his statement that thousands "would sooner put up with their present hardships" rather than submit to the means test which accompanies the administration of the Determination of Needs Act, 1941. Thousands of people have to submit to a means test carried out by officers of the Board of Customs to obtain the basic pension of 10s. How would a flat rate be cheaper in the end? The first concern should be the welfare of the aged and not the cost of providing them with reasonable comfort in the eventide of life.

The officers of the Assistance Board take a personal interest in the welfare of the old people and they carry out their duties with tact, sympathy, and understanding. Every kindness is shown in the administration of the means test.

The real solution, I believe, would be to increase the basic pension to £1 a week and to have the supplementary pension to meet exceptional need, such as domestic help, etc. But a change of heart will be necessary before the problem can be seen by Parliament from the old age pensioners' point of view.

"SYMPATHETIC."

COST-OF-LIVING BONUS

Not a Salary Increase

IN his letter on cost-of-living bonus in the March Journal, Mr. W. T. Jeffries seems to have got hold of the wrong end of the stick. The payment of a war bonus is not intended—as is a salary increase—to advance the standard of living, but rather to maintain it, or to minimise any fall brought about by increased prices.

In March, 1942, the cost-of-living index was 200, and it has remained around that figure since, now standing at 199. If his war bonus has become payable during this past year it must have enabled him to attain a better standard of living than he enjoyed immediately before he received the bonus; it certainly is not intended to advance his pre-war standard.

Exeter.

W. H. PENGELLEY.

COMBATING V.D.

"No Certain Cure."

WHILST the letter from H. Thomas shows a laudable desire to enrol NALGO members in support of the Government's campaign to combat the evils of V.D., one regrets to find that even 33 years as a V.D. orderly permits erroneous statements to be made regarding the treatment of these diseases.

What, may one ask, is the certain cure for syphilis which has been known since 1910 and on what grounds does he judge a certain cure? What about the cases who received intensive 606 or 914 treatment, and then, long after he has finished with them—five, or even thirty years, perhaps—are admitted to our mental hospitals with G.P.I.? And what of the other sequelae of V.D. which only show themselves years after the supposed cure?

Even the M. & B. 693 treatment of gonorrhoea is only in its infancy and, whilst most cases appear to respond, it will take several years before the true value of it can be adequately assessed.

No, let us be candid and admit that, whilst some advances in treatment have been made, none have yet reached the stage when a certain cure can be guaranteed. The spirochaeta and gonococcus are no respecter of persons, and the "woefully ignorant" extends to a far wider group than "the poorer class of citizens."

(Continued on page 346)

guarding the flock . . .



From the ends of the earth
they come . . . our precious ships
and their brave crews through peril of storm
stalked by wolves . . . *the wolves of the sea*—
the U-boats in packs.
But the Navy is there—
and overhead the planes—spotting—
bringing the convoy Home with its urgent load.
Food, raw materials,
Oil for the tanks,
Munitions—
to feed the gathering force of
the great assault—the final blow !
Precious cargoes
precious men—and the wolves are many.
They multiply, they swarm.
They prowl ceaselessly.
But the convoy comes home, for our planes
are overhead
Spotting, swooping, striking—guarding the flock.

* * * *

What are we on the home front doing in the war against the U-boats? It is our part to work harder and to save more to stop waste, to save food and fuel and **CUT OUR SPENDING.** That is the vital support which we must give to the seamen and the airmen who risk their lives for us. The great thing at this moment when the dawn is breaking is to **SAVE MORE.**

(Continued from page 344)

Why is V.D. not in the list of notifiable diseases? A pennyworth of prevention is worth a pound of so-called cures, and if the dissemination of the facts of V.D. helps to enlighten the "woefully ignorant" of the ravages of these diseases and prevent individuals from running the risk of infection, then the propaganda will be well worth while. But promises of so-called cures are likely to lead to the same disillusionment as resulted from the promises of a land fit for heroes.

A. L. HOWDEN, F.I.M.L.T., F.R.M.S., F.F.Sc.
Pathological Laboratory,
West Riding Mental Hospital.

WAR-TIME PROBLEMS A Threefold Solution

MAY I, as a local government officer invalided home from service overseas, express my appreciation of the fine work done by officers, and NALGO in particular, in their contribution to the war effort?

My impression on returning home and visiting my colleagues was that, although much has been done to maintain the order and efficiency of local government in the absence of a high percentage of "permanent" officers, the position, in respect of recruitment to NALGO and the maintenance of the previous high standard of efficiency—in my opinion our two main duties—is not satisfactory.

I have discussed these questions with a number of colleagues, both "permanent" and "temporary." The consensus of opinion is that local authorities, by offering unsatisfactory wage rates, are not attracting the best type of employee and that, even where people with experience are attracted, there is, as a result of these wage rates, a lack of incentive to give that extra little bit of effort so urgently needed in war-time. The position is not helped by the fact that many authorities seem to have failed to arrange adequate training for the new entrants and are content to allow things to sort themselves out, leaving much inessential routine, and placing on the shoulders of the remaining "permanent" officers, many of whom are women, increased burdens of work and responsibility.

In my opinion, our first task is 100 per cent recruitment to NALGO. This can be done—and as one important step towards it, I suggest that, since the majority of officers are now women, all branches and district committees which have not done so should set up women's committees.

At the same time, the work of Whitley councils must be generally intensified, with special attention to the younger officers and to women, especially permanent officers, keeping in mind the declared policy of NALGO of "Equal pay for equal work." Locally, the establishing of local joint committees is an immediate need.

Finally, I think there is general agreement that staffs, if consulted and encouraged, could do a lot to smooth out the difficulties in departmental working. Properly constituted staff committees, if the right spirit is shown, would be the solution. I know of one such committee in a trading department which has done a great deal in these directions.

Glasgow branch. N. C. McLEAN.

TEMPORARIES v. PERMANENTS Commercial v. Municipal Experience

MY views on commercial and municipal life, having had experience of both are as follows:

Commercial Life

A large commercial office is a better training ground than a local government office because of its stricter discipline and organisation and the more varied work, providing a broader knowledge.

Promotion and salary increases are gained only by merit, not by age or length of service,

with the result that an employee strives more to get on and merit is rewarded.

Punctuality is insisted upon and employees who are repeatedly late are threatened with a decrease in salary or dismissal.

All staff matters, including disciplinary action or dismissal, are dealt with either by a director or staff manager.

Holidays, pensions, sickness schemes are not nearly so good as in a local government office.

Municipal Life

A commercial training is invaluable in local government, enabling the employee to adopt useful schemes and ideas learned in commercial life.

Promotion is not always by merit and, with salary increases by scale, an efficient and hard worker gains no benefit by comparison with a less efficient worker.

Default in punctuality carries no penalty.

All staff matters and dismissals must go before committees for approval.

Holidays, pensions, sickness schemes, etc., are, on the whole, better than in commercial offices.

Wallasey.

E. DYSON.

Public Service First

BEFORE my call-up I had the privilege of serving (as a peace-time temporary) over a period of several years in a Metropolitan borough. Like most people from commercial life, I was at first appalled by the apparent lack of efficiency of many members of the permanent staff and the apparently slipshod manner in which some departments seemed to be run. Later, however, I served in several departments of the authority and was entrusted with a measure of responsibility bringing me into close contact with some of the inner workings of local government. I thus saw the mosaic more completely, and then realised that each piece fitted in more or less and that, often, to increase apparent efficiency in one section would impair the working of others.

Probably the greatest criticism that can be made is the difficulty of obtaining a decision. Yet this, especially among chief officers, is usually due to the realisation that they are custodians of public funds. This, I think, is the vital difference between the local government and the commercial clerk. To the latter the job comes first, with wage or dismissal as alpha and omega; to the former, public service comes first—with reward, though very real, taking a secondary place.

SOCRATES.

"Faithful and Efficient"

I AM an accountant and joined the municipal service from commercial life. My knowledge of finance departments is of faithful and efficient service, hampered by legal requirements and departmental regulations.

In the interests of all parties, bad feeling should be avoided, but I could give "Chum," a Services' definition of temporaries. I will remind him that his "war effort" might have taken him into more unpleasant surroundings and conditions.

His naive generalisations leave one with the idea that the fear of the sack hangs impartially over everyone in commercial life. I wish him a speedy return to the utopia where efficiency is the only ladder to promotion.

R.A.F.

Both sides having had a fair innings, this correspondence must now cease.

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A childless member of the Lancashire County Council branch in an assured position, wishes to adopt a girl aged 3-4, to whom he can offer a good home and education. Will any reader knowing of a suitable orphan write to the editor, 27, Abingdon Street, Westminster, S.W.12

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Military

KILLED OR DIED ON SERVICE

Ashworth, E., gas dept., Southport (at sea).
 Atkinson, F/O., R.A.F., treasurer's dept., York.
 Bener, Spr. W. G., R.E., clerk, P.L.A.
 Brooks, R.E., clerk, P.L.A.
 Burns, Cpl. F., Airborne Troops, blind persons dept., West Riding C.C.
 Burt, P/O. W., R.A.F., law apprentice, town clerk's dept., Edinburgh.
 Champness, A. J., clerk, P.L.A.
 Clendillon, F/O. J. A., R.A.F., engineer's dept., East Ham.
 Clohosy, R. J., R.N.V.R., clerk, P.L.A. (in naval action).
 Giles, Sgt. G. V. W., R.A.F., libraries dept., Woolwich (in Middle East).
 Hilton, J. A., R.A.F., clerk, P.L.A. (in Middle East).
 Locke, L/A. G. E. M., Fleet Air Arm, public assistance dept., Kent C.C. (in Middle East).
 Privyree, 2/Lt. J. S., R.E., clerk, P.L.A.
 Raddon, Bn. Sgt.-Major A. J., Light A.A., R.A., surveyor's dept., Exeter (in N. Africa).
 Ravey, Sub-Lt. (A.) W., 22, R.N.R., health dept., Ilford.
 Roberts, Sgt.-Pt. J. E., R.A.F., public assistance dept., Denbighshire (at Malta).
 Rogers, Lt.-Col. G. C., R.E., asst. warehouse-keeper, P.L.A. (in North Africa).
 Rosam, Sgt. A/G. R. C., 21, R.A.F.V.R., engineer's dept., Lambeth.
 Sinstadt, Acting L/A. R. A., 21, Fleet Air Arm, town clerk's dept., Barking.
 *Spencer, Sgt./Obs. G. R., 30, R.A.F., clerk's dept., Cuslodon and Purley.
 Stiles, L/Cpl. A., R.E., health dept., Lindsey C.C.
 Stuckey, Sgt./Obs. G. V., R.A.F., planning dept., Gloucestershire C.C. (in North Africa).
 *White, Sgt.-Nav. F. G., R.A.F.V.R., finance dept., Surrey C.C.
 White, P/O. S., R.A.F., asst. master, The Institution, York.
 Wright, Sgt.-Pt. K. W., R.A.F.V.R., health dept., Derby.

MISSING

Amond, Sgt. K., R.A.F., health dept., Norfolk (after operational flight).
 Atkinson, Fus. Lt., surveyor's dept., Consett U.D.C. (believed prisoner in N. Africa).
 Bayley, P/O. G. C., D.F.C., R.A.F., chief engineering asst., Isle of Thanet.
 Bell, Sgt.-Pt. S., 22, R.A.F., surveyor's dept., Gateshead.
 Bryson, AC/I F. C., 21, R.A.F., library asst., Gateshead (at Singapore).
 Charlton, Staff-Sgt. G., 32, R.A.M.C., sanitary inspector, Gateshead (at Singapore).
 Corrigan, Sgt/Pt. D. V., R.A.F.V.R., treasurer's dept., Horncchurch.
 Greenshields, Sgt. P. E. F., R.A.F., public control dept., Surrey C.C.
 Hancock, Sgt.-A/G. C. J., 22, R.A.F., engineer's dept., Wandsworth.
 Nicholls, F/O. E. G., R.A.F., public assistance dept., West Riding C.C.
 Perrons, O/Cdr. A. W., R.N., treasurer's dept., Nottingham (presumed killed whilst on convoy work on H.M.S. Fire Drake).
 Pollard, Sgt. M. A., R.A.F., education dept., Liverpool (from operational flight).
 Price, P. D. N. G., R.A.F., treasurer's dept., Weston-super-Mare (from operational flight).
 Regan, E. S., health dept., Wandsworth.
 Young, P/O. D., 21, R.A.F., engineer's dept., Durham County Water Board (from raid on Italy).

PRISONERS OF WAR

Phillips, Sgt. C. H., 27, R.A., treasurer's dept., Gateshead (in Middle East).
 Waters, Gnr. C., 27, R.A., treasurer's dept., Gateshead (in Middle East).
 Wright, Gnr. F. W., 24, R.A., library asst., Gateshead (in Middle East).

AROUND THE DISTRICT COMMITTEES

HIGHLIGHTS of recent district committee meetings include:

South Western (on March 6, at Exeter)—In the past three years nearly one-third of all local authorities in the district have amended their salary scales or adopted scales and grading. Only a few of the smaller authorities have failed to adopt a satisfactory scheme for supplementing war service pay; action is to be taken against them under the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order. The district committee is to hold a special meeting to consider the interim report of the NALGO Reconstruction Committee.

Southern (on February 20, in London)—The women's sub-committee is launching a recruiting drive among nurses, following publication of the Ruschcliffe report. Tribute was paid to Mr. J. Lowery, branch secretary at Amersham, who has successfully persuaded the council to adopt a grading scheme and

Civilian

KILLED

Heath, W. F., clerk, P.L.A. (while on duty in air raid).
 Holmdahl, A., clerk, P.L.A. (while on duty in air raid).
 Nicholls, R. C., clerk, P.L.A. (while on duty in air raid).
 Reid, H. J., clerk, P.L.A. (while on duty in air raid).
 Thackeray, Miss M. J., clerk's dept., Reading (as result of injuries sustained through enemy action).
 Wilton, W. G., clerk, P.L.A. (while on duty in air raid).

CORRECTIONS

Capt. R. A. L. Beene, of Nottingham, whose death was recorded in the March journal, should have been described as Major Beene. Also in the March journal, the name of Sgt. W. O. A. G. P. J. Capon, of Gillingham, released from internment at Algiers, was incorrectly given as Paton.

AWARDS TO MEMBERS

Forces

Gayler, P/O. R., R.A.F., 26, gas and water dept., Clacton (for bombing operations).

D.F.C.

Chapman, Sgt.-P. D., R.A.F.V.R., Stretford (for conspicuous service on operational flights over the Bay of Biscay).

D.F.M.

Willins, F/Sgt. J., R.A.F., engineer's dept., Edinburgh.

M.C.

Deavin, 2/Lt. P., R.E. surveyor's dept., Bucks. C.C.

KRZYZ WALECZNICH

Hayman, Lt. E. F., R.N.V.R., junior technical asst. engineer's dept., Lewisham—awarded by the Polish Government for his services to that Government.

U.S. AIR MEDAL

*Iredale, F/Sgt. J. P., R.A.F. (Photographic Reconnaissance Unit), treasurer's dept., Bradford.

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES AND G.M.

Clark, Maj. A. C., R.E., P.L.A. (for conspicuous gallantry in carrying out hazardous work while on active service).

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES AND O.B.E.

Gentry, Lt.-Col. J. S. B., R.E., P.L.A. (for distinguished service in Middle East).

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES

Turner, Sgt. J., R.A.S.C. (attached to G.H.Q., M.E.F.), treasurer's dept., Brierley Hill (formerly branch secretary).

MENTIONED IN HONOURS LIST

Mackley, F/Sgt. Milly, W.A.A.F., finance dept., Northumberland C.C.

Civilian

B.E.M.

Allen, C. J. A., and Murphy, W. J., clerks, P.L.A.—for service as leaders of first aid parties at India and Millwall Docks control during raids.

* Previously reported missing.

Hospitality for Warriors

The following additions and amendments have been received for the list of branches and members offering hospitality to members in the Forces or to women members and relatives of members engaged on war work in their areas. As announced last month, shortage of space makes it impossible to publish the full list every month, therefore members interested should refer to page 323 of the March journal until a revised list appears.

NEW ADDRESSES

Dagenham.—Miss E. BARTON, Civic Centre (Seven Kings 3722, ex. 67). Sports room available. Men and women welcomed (write or phone first).

Wigan.—J. ASHTON, Health dept., Municipal Bldgs.

CHANGED ADDRESSES

Epworth (Doncaster).—J. S. MARSHALL, Troyville, Westgate, Bilton, Doncaster.

Penarth, Glam.—Miss E. M. COOK, Electricity dept., Westbourne Road.

Retirements

Mr. W. E. Clark, borough treasurer, Bermondsey, a former member of the branch in 1911 and its secretary from 1912 to 1922 (excluding war service).

Mr. A. Watkins, clerk to Llanelly R.D.C. and superintendent registrar, after 40 years in local government service.

Mr. Evan Williams, rent collector Llanelly R.D. and a founder member of the branch.

Obituary

We regret to record the death, at the age of 59, of Mr. A. T. Jones, clerk to Llanelly assessment committee, registrar of births and deaths for the Llanelly rural area and clerk to Llanelly union south old age pensions sub-committee.

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NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

L.G.S.135

NALGO in Scotland is on the march.

The propaganda committee of the Scottish district committee has agreed to launch a membership recruiting campaign throughout the country, and each branch will soon be asked to go all out to bring non-member colleagues into the Association. The divisional office is laying in stocks of propaganda literature, a panel of speakers is being prepared—and it is rumoured that the acting divisional secretary even talks in his sleep of "10,000 NALGO members in Scotland by 1944!"

Some branches have already started. **Kirkcaldy**, for example, added nearly 50 per cent. to its membership this month, thanks to the efforts of the branch president and secretary. And requests for supplies of "All about NALGO" and "Welcome to the New Junior Officer," two excellent little leaflets which deal concisely with NALGO's aims and activities, are coming in daily.

The time is undoubtedly opportune. For the seeds that were sown in 1937, when the Joint Industrial Council for Local Authority Staffs in Scotland was formed, are at last bearing fruit. The new cost-of-living bonus, which came into operation on December 1 last and for the first time brought Scotland into line with English awards, has been quickly followed by more improvements. The executive committee of the Joint Industrial Council has now recommended that officers earning over £500 shall receive a bonus of £24 per annum, which is again the applicable English figure. The recommendation was made as a result of an application by NALGO to Aberdeen town council, which was referred by Aberdeen to the Joint Industrial Council. (Previously the J.I.C. had refused to make any recommendation at all for officers in this class.) It is true that £24 per annum is little enough (precious little indeed when income-tax and superannuation have been deducted!), but at least the Scottish senior officer is no longer at a disadvantage by comparison with his English opposite number. He must also remember that the Government is still adamant in its refusal to give any bonus to civil servants in the over £500 classes.

Another step forward, for which NALGO has been fighting for years, has been taken.

HOW THEY RAISE MONEY FOR B. & O. FUND

CONTRIBUTIONS to the Benevolent and Orphan Fund are rolling in steadily now, and while dances, whist drives, raffles, and the like continue to be the most usual methods of augmenting subscriptions, some branches have hit on more unusual or ambitious schemes.

Pride of place this month must go to Kent County Officers, who raised £363 last year by a wide variety of schemes—including a sale of toys and handicrafts made by members and their wives (which netted £60); gramophone recitals; the collection of horse chestnuts for the County Herb Society; public concerts by the staff musical society; part profits (£31 10s.) from the voluntary land club; and collections made on pay day.

Bermondsey has found a football pontoon a most profitable venture. Though holders of teams aggregating 21 goals get a prize of 25 guineas, and only 15 per cent of the money collected in 6d. shares goes to the Fund, it has provided £129 this season!

Barking puts the dramatic talent of its members to good use, and its NALGO players have raised £20 with their first full-length production—Cyril Campion's "Ladies in Waiting."

Lancashire County Officers had a dining club which has now been taken over by the county council—so they gave the accumulated profits of £228 14s. 4d. to the Fund!

The J.I.C. executive committee has agreed the terms of a minimum sickness payment scheme, which will be recommended for adoption by all Scottish authorities. Details cannot yet be given, for the recommendations are still subject to confirmation, but it is certain that the new scheme will be a big improvement on the conditions at present applying in many local authorities, though it will not supersede any more generous local schemes.

The next step must be the revision of the present J.I.C. minimum salary scales, with their entirely inadequate maxima of £180 for men and £125 for women. The staff side has tabled detailed proposals for a new scale, and it is hoped that a decision will not be delayed much longer.

NALGO in Scotland has been very patient—but patience is no longer regarded as its own reward!

War Service Pay

Application has been made to **Port Glasgow** town council, the only large burgh in Scotland not supplementing the service pay of its officers in the Forces, to reconsider the matter in the light of recent decisions of the National Arbitration Tribunal.

Extension of Office Hours

Clydebank town council has extended working hours to 46 a week, with the overtime payment recommended by the J.I.C.

A BOROUGH IN THE BLITZ

MUCH has been written—in this journal particularly—of the way in which local government met, tackled, and to a large extent conquered the problems of "The Blitz." Hitherto, most of that commentary—exemplified particularly in the Ministry of Information's splendid "Front Line"—has dealt with the subject in general terms, covering the broad canvas of the whole of Britain. In "War Over West Ham" (Faber & Faber, 6s.), Miss Doreen Idle has made what is, so far as we know, the first attempt to bring the commentary down to the local level, showing how an individual borough fared when heavy raids broke upon it, describing the mistakes that were

Nurses' Salaries Committee

Following the issue of the interim report (summarised last month), the chairman of the Nurses' Salaries Committee, Professor T. M. Taylor, has been asked by the Secretary of State to complete the work of the committee as soon as possible. The acting divisional secretary has succeeded Mr. H. Slater as NALGO's representative on the nurses panel.

We doff our bonnets to:

Glasgow Branch Youth Section for its successful production of "Nit Wittington," an ambitious pantomime in which Nit sells himself to the Devil in order to enter the employ of the town council "without passing the examination," is expelled by a burlesque NALGO executive, and ends up as chief burgher, after thwarting mysterious Nazi designs on the Youth Section headquarters and devilish attempts to blow the City Chambers sky-high. High-spot: "The NALGO Chorus," with its catchy refrain of:

"Equal Pay for Equal Work,

That is the Battle Cry of NALGO!"

The show, seen by 700 people, raised about £15 for the Red Cross.

Hamilton town council, for being the first Scottish local authority to agree to the formation of a local joint committee.

Argyll branch and **Renfrewshire branch**, for donations of £15 and £10 10s. to the B. and O. Fund.

made, the difficulties that had to be overcome, the triumphs that were achieved, and the lessons that are to be learned from failures and successes alike.

As she says in her preface, she was commissioned (by the Fabian Society, with the aid of a grant from the Ethical Union) to "go, look, listen, observe, and fear nothing." Of the admirable way in which she fulfilled that maxim the resulting book is evidence. No doubt many West Ham readers will be able to point to omissions, errors on points of detail, inadequate or exaggerated emphasis on this point or that. Taken as a whole, however, we consider that the book will be regarded as a fair, unbiased and constructively critical report on the life of a borough during the time when local—and national—government was exposed to its most severe test and, as such, invaluable to all interested in the working of our democratic machinery.

Miss Idle has had the good sense not to begin her narrative with the first nightmare attack of September 7, 1940. Realising that much that followed was conditioned by what had gone before, she opens with an excellent summary of the civic and social history of the borough, and a penetrating analysis of its administrative strengths and weaknesses. "The Blitz" itself is vividly described—within the drastic limitations of the censorship—and the resulting problems are analysed in detail. Though neither persons, parties, nor institutions are spared—the borough council in particular, and the lethargy of the political groups, are severely criticised—the conclusions are, in the main, encouraging. If West Ham made mistakes—and what area did not?—it also profited from them and achieved successes, too. To those who pin their faith in democratic local government this book will provide some salutary shocks, but it will not undermine that faith—and it will give ground for pride as well. "War Over West Ham," in short, is a book no local government officer, no councillor, and no intelligent citizen should fail to read. We hail it as a pioneer and trust it will find successors describing, with similar objectivity, what happened in other of Britain's battered boroughs during those memorable nights and days.

Colwyn Bay has adopted a sliding scale for contributions, varying from 3d. a month on salaries up to £150 p.a. to 2s. 6d. on salaries over £600. This, plus proceeds of dances, brought in £37 for the year.

Carlisle has hit on the bright idea of making members pay for their copies of LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE—by which means it added £6 2s. to a donation of £25 and an increase of £26 in subscriptions (bringing the average to 7s. 7d. a head).

Other recent donations include:

Barrow—£73 19s. from a dance;

Bootle—£63, including £23 from a monthly draw for Savings Certificates and £40 from branch funds;

Stretford—£31 6s. 4d. from two dances;

Bridgwater—£30 from a dance;

Cheltenham—£14 18s., donation from tennis club and profit on a raffle;

Widnes—£13 7s. 9d. from a Christmas draw;

Yeovil—£13 6s. 10d. from a concert and dance;

Kingston-on-Thames—£12 19s. 6d. from a whist drive and raffle.

Congratulations to . . .

Mr. J. Southworth, on completing 21 years as chairman of the Wigan branch.

Miss J. Keith, welfare officer of Wigston, and her colleagues, on training 80 evacuee children from London to give a play which raised over £30 for the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund, and was repeated during the local Wings for Victory week.

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WORLD IN AN AWFUL MESS

Cynical Epigram

*Let tyrannies all to free republics pass,
The one by coppers ruled; the others brass.*

Legal Department

In *Silvertop v. The Stepney Guardians* a man trained a parrot to say three times after meals, "Councillor Wart has not washed to-day." It was held that this was a libel. —A. P. Herbert—"Misleading Cases in the Common Law."

On a Politician

*Here richly, with ridiculous display,
The politician's corpse was laid away.
While all his acquaintances sneered and slanged,
I wept: for I had longed to see him hanged.*
—Hilaire Belloc.

The Excuses They Make

The accident was due to the other fellow narrowly missing me.

She suddenly saw me and lost her head.
Dog on the road applied brakes causing skid.
I misjudged a lady crossing the road.

Cow wandered into lorry. I was afterwards informed that the cow was half-witted.

I knocked over a man; he admitted it was his fault as he had been knocked over before.
—From "Londoner's Life" by Charles Graves.

L.G. Official (on retirement):

"Bring me no more reports; let them fly all."

—Macbeth.

Friendship

*Many must die,
Yet there will be some from whom the gift of living*

*Is lesser giving,
Than loss of long-loved friends; Of these am I.*

*For this I hold:
Friendship is more than love, longer than love;
And it shall prove*

Warmth to the spirit when the body's cold.
—Stephen Haggard (died on active service, Middle East, February, 1943)

SALARIES AND SERVICE CONDITIONS

NORTH-EASTERN

Durham C.C. has adopted the following improved scales of salaries for permanent staff from April 1:

Men
Grade A: £50 (under 16); £60 (at 16) + 10—£90 (at 19), with automatic transfer to
Grade B: £125 (at 20) + 15—£245 (at 28).
Grade C: £250 + 15—£310. Grade E: £390 + 15—£450.
Grade D: £325 + 15—£370. Grade F: £475 + 25—£550.

Women
Grade A: £50 (under 16); + 10—£90 (at 19), with automatic transfer to
Grade B: £100 (at 20) + 10—£180 (at 28).
Grade C: £190 + 15—£250.
Plus long service increments for all grades (except E and F) of £10 on April 1 after 15th year of service and £15 on April 1 after 20th year of service.

Middlesbrough C.B. has adopted an improved scale for male juniors and the following improved scales for women:

Class A: £45 (at 16)—£100 (at 21).
Class B: £115 (at 22)—£150 (at 25).
Plus £10 p.a. to machine operators or shorthand typists with speed of 120 w.p.m.
Class C: £160 + 10—£190.
Plus £20 p.a. for assistants with supervisory duties.
Class D: £200 + 10—£240.

Tynemouth C.B. has adopted North Eastern provincial council scales, Grades A and B, for men and women, and is considering regrading its staff within the higher scales.

SOUTH WESTERN

Cheltenham B. has adopted a sick pay scheme for temporary officers providing for six weeks' full pay and six weeks' half pay after six months' service.

Party Conversation

"Patricia says that, if polygamy is legalised after the war, she doesn't mind how many wives Jack has if they'll do the housework."

Propaganda

So before the British citizen turns to whatever news he is permitted to read in his daily paper, he will have run his eye down a column of scoundrelly falsehoods; he will believe that a morning glass of laxative will enable him to leap five-barred gates, and when he drinks hot water with a faint flavour of meat he will still be persuaded that he is imbibing the strength of a whole ox.—From "Phoenix," by H. C. Wells.

Paignton U.D. has graded the staff within the South Western provincial council scales.

Penzance B. has adopted the South Western provincial council scales.

Salcombe U.D. has adopted the South Western provincial council scales and bonus.

Truro R.D. has adopted a sick pay scheme providing for three months' full and three months' half pay without N.H.I. deductions for permanent officers with over five years' service; one month's full and one month's half pay without N.H.I. deductions for permanent officers with less than five years' service; and one month's full and two weeks' half pay, with N.H.I. deductions, for temporary staff—each case to be reviewed after expiry of the maximum period of allowance.

SOUTHERN

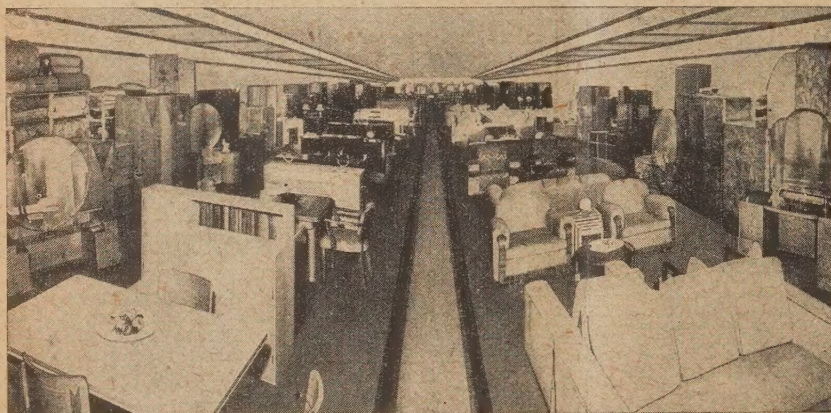
Amersham R.D. has adopted the South Midlands provincial council scales and graded the staff, together with regulations covering service conditions, increments, promotion, examination grants, post-entry training, office hours, holidays, sickness allowances, and a joint staff committee.

Banbury R.D. has adopted the South Midlands provincial council scales, graded the staff, and decided to become a constituent member of the provincial council.

Berkshire C.C. has adopted a sick pay scheme providing two weeks' full pay after six months' service, increasing to 26 weeks' full pay during the 22nd and subsequent years of service.

Cost of Living Unchanged

The Ministry of Labour cost-of-living index stood unchanged last month at 199, representing an increase of 28.4 per cent since the outbreak of war.



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